MANAGING SCHOOL DIVISION AMALGAMATIONS:

PROCESS AND TRANSITIONS

A thesis

submitted to the

College of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the

Department of Educational Administration

of the College of Education

University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon

by

Mary A. Reddyk

Spring 2000

PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment for the requirements for a postgraduate degree from the University of Saskatchewan, I agree that the Libraries of this University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor who supervised my thesis work or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department or the Dean of the College in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of Saskatchewan in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

Requests for permission to copy or make use of the material in this dissertation in whole or in part should be addressed to:

Head of the Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan
3079 Education Building
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7N 0X1
Canada

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to describe and analyse, within the context of organizational theory, the process and management of school division amalgamations. Focusing on mergers and transitions and the management of change, the process of amalgamation and the management of that process were examined and provided a foundation to develop a broader understanding of the complexities and dynamics inherent in school division amalgamations.

Based upon a literature review of organizational change, corporate mergers and acquisitions, organizational leadership, and educational governance reform, the conceptual framework which guided the study addressed school division amalgamations from the organizational perspective of planned and managed second-order change. The conceptual framework drew upon Levy's (1986) driving forces for change, Tichy's (1983) conceptualization of change as occurring within and between technical, political, and cultural systems, and Bridges' (1992) iterative phases of transition. Literature on corporate mergers and acquisitions served to enhance understandings of the dynamics inherent in school division amalgamations.

A case study was used to investigate the process and transitions of a school division amalgamation. Data were obtained from an analysis of 25 in-depth interviews with key actors, documentation, and attendance at numerous board, steering committee, and interest group meetings. The inductive method of analysis allowed for the identification of potential themes, questions, and emerging theories and assisted in the organization of the data both categorically and chronologically.

It was found that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the cultural aspects of an amalgamation. Discovering and critically examining the beliefs and values of the school divisions' and communities' various cultures is vital to the implementation of a cultural

integration strategy. Furthermore, there is a need for increased attention to the iterative phases of the transition process, a gradual psychological process through which individuals or groups reorient themselves during times of organizational upheaval. In times of uncertainty, such as during school division amalgamations, it is important that an organization's components of mission and strategy, structure, and human resources be aligned within the technical, political, and cultural systems of an organization. The study supported earlier research that maintaining the credibility of the amalgamation process is largely dependent upon keeping the lines of communication open, the timely sharing of consistent and accurate information, and the inclusion of all stakeholder groups. Communication is a key component of human resources management.

The study indicated that amalgamation of school divisions may well result in changing roles for Directors, Boards of Education, trustees, principals, and teachers. Leadership at both local and provincial levels is an important component of successful mergers and the management of planned change. In addition, leaders of governance reform need to consider the "bigger picture" with regard to the restructuring of provincial school divisions, thus ensuring that governance restructuring includes and benefits *all* school divisions within the province.

The study concludes with a discussion of implications for practice, suggestions for further research, and the presentation of a model of the school division amalgamation process and transition management.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like express my sincerest thanks and appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Vivian Hajnal. Her constant support, encouragement, assistance and guidance made this study an engaging and satisfying learning experience. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Murray Scharf for his timely and thought-provoking comments and to Dr. Peter Phillips, Dr. Larry Sackney, and Dr. Keith Walker for their valuable contributions as members of the thesis committee. Gratitude and thanks are extended to Dr. Ruth Rees, Queen's University, for so graciously agreeing to serve as the external examiner, for reviewing the thesis, and for the constructive comments offered at the oral examination.

Thanks and appreciation are extended to the Directors and study participants of the school divisions involved in the amalgamation case study and for their willingness to trust me and to share their stories. Their interest and cooperation made my research efforts that much easier.

A special thanks is extended to Bryan Tallon, Director, and the Swift Current School Division #94 for their support and belief in the value of this endeavor.

To my daughter, Juanita, and my siblings, especially Erna, Anita and Pete—many thanks for your encouragement and support. In particular—thanks, Erna, for helping me to come up with just the "right word." A special note of appreciation goes out to friends and cohorts for their encouragement.

DEDICATION

To "*sisters*"and specifically, to *my* sisters—Erna, Anita, Lucille, and Fran. As sisters, we have laughed together at both ourselves and over the strangest things. As sisters, we have wept and sought solace within each others embrace when life threw us an unexpected curve. As sisters, we have experienced each of us becoming a person in her own right and, through this experience, we have learned to love and accept each other for whom and what we are. As sisters, we have delighted in the maturing of our own children and nieces and nephews; they are an integral part of our shared life-experience. As sisters, we are part of the sisterhood of women and, as such, we have unique gifts to offer and share.

> When I speak of the erotic, then I speak of it as an assertion of the life force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives.
>
> —Audre Lorde, 1978

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

> Born often under another sky, placed in the middle of an always moving scene, himself driven by the irresistible torrent which draws all about him, the [educator] has no time to tie himself to anything, he grows accustomed only to change, and ends by regarding it as the natural state of man. He feels the need of it, more, he loves it; for the instability, instead of meaning disaster to him, seems to give birth only to miracles all about him.
>
> —Alexis de Tocqueville, 1831

Life is turbulent, full of uncertainties, and fraught with a multitude of complex, continuous, and accelerating changes. Issues and pressures for continued change are evidenced by the challenges resulting from the proliferation of scientific discoveries, the shift from the "age of the individual" to the "age of the community," debates over global concerns, and the approach of a new millennium (Frye, 1991, p. 17). Added to this is a recognition of the environment as an influencing variable, the demographic slump indicated by lower birth rates in developed countries, the changing workplace, and skill-shortages in non-traditional areas (Foot & Stoffman, 1999; McCalman & Paton, 1992, p. 3). These external forces both create a need and provide an impetus for internal change in individuals and organizations.

Nowhere has change been more evident than in the recent restructuring of organizations in both the private and public sector. Indeed, despite the tendency of companies, institutions, and individuals to resist change, change waits for no one. When managers *do* decide to address their particular change needs, too often they jump on the current "band wagon" and adopt the latest "buzzword," words such as excellence, benchmarking, demassing, total quality management, downsizing, rightsizing, zero-based budgeting, decentralization, or reengineering (Want, 1995). The list is endless. However, despite what descriptor is used, these varied approaches frequently do not, in reality,

change the way organizations manage themselves while trying to be more competitive or even to survive.

In the world of business, mergers and acquisitions (M&A's) have used financial performance, measured objectively in terms of profit-earning ratios and share price fluctuations and subjectively by assessments of managers and analysts, as the most common indicator of success (Cartwright & Cooper, 1994). However, as Cartwright and Cooper indicated:

> Increasingly the success of any organizational combination has been gauged by the reactions of the individuals affected. This has involved the use of behavioral indices to assess success in terms of the impact the event has had on employer outcomes such as labor turnover, job satisfaction, commitment, stress and affective response. (p. 48)

Whether the event in question occurred as a M & A, amalgamation, consolidation, or restructuring, the event itself is a "complex human as well as financial [and political] phenomena" (Cartwright & Cooper, 1994, p. 49). The idea is not new, but a resurgence of interest in the management of transitions indicates a perceived need for a more holistic approach to the phenomenon of change. Moreover, there are helpful lessons to be assimilated from the past which address the technical, political and cultural aspects of amalgamations and restructurings, lessons that have implications for more proactive and effective management of alliances, whether corporate or institutional.

Amalgamation concerns have not bypassed educational structures. Primarily resulting from fiscal constraints and declining enrollments, school systems throughout Canada are experiencing governance reform through the consolidation of school divisions/districts. Virtually all provinces have responded to public demand for reduced costs by amalgamating school divisions to create larger governance units (Fleming, 1997; Green & Pierce, 1997, p. 2). While the amalgamation of school divisions is unique to each specific case (Monk & Haller, 1986), people become concerned with issues such as the education of their children, educational costs, community identity, and the way in which

amalgamation occurs. The willingness of individuals to support the effort is affected by factors such as community involvement, relationships, communication, planning strategies, and timing (Mitchell, 1994). In other words, aspects of restructuring that address the management of a merger process are key to its success.

School divisions involved in an amalgamation initiative need to have a clear conceptualization of the process to be followed, a process that must be responsive to the technical, the political, and the cultural strands of an organization (Tichy, 1983). Work, the technical problem; power, the political problem; and values, the cultural problem, are "dialectical in nature. Organizations constantly juggle trade-offs between these three areas, [creating] interrelated cycles of uncertainty" (p. 17). There is no question that these interdependent organization strands must strive for congruency and this is particularly true for educational institutions engaged in a transition process. Therefore, the phenomenon to be addressed in this case study is the management of a school division amalgamation process, a process that takes into account the interplay of the technical, political, and cultural aspects of change. Insights and understandings of the management of an amalgamation process and the resolution of issues will serve to enhance change theory and be of value to subsequent amalgamation initiatives.

Background to the Problem

The commonly held educational beliefs of equal opportunity and equalities of benefit suggest that all children, regardless of age, gender, cultural background, and socioeconomic status have the right to an appropriate education. Moreover, the task of providing children with a "good education" has had implications for the structure and governance of educational systems (SSTA, 1993). In Saskatchewan, efforts to systemize rural schools began even before the province achieved provincial status. Although few, if any, communities willingly gave up their schools, the realities of rural life and the need for

efficiency and effectiveness served to reduce the number of school jurisdictions (Funk, 1971).

Arguments over the wisdom of the amalgamation or consolidation of school divisions have continued through this century and will doubtless continue into the new millennium. Saskatchewan school divisions are confronting, once again, governance reforms through the amalgamation of school divisions. Demands for increased efficiency and equity of opportunity have prompted the call for a further restructuring of the educational system. Both the Langlois/Scharf Report (1991) and the Task Force of Educational Governance (SSTA, 1993) outlined reasons why changes in educational governance are occurring. The provincial government is committed to amalgamation as a restructuring device to make the best possible use of resources, while, at the same time, recognizing pressures from issues such as global competitiveness; poverty and emotional distress; the changing demographics of our province; the demand for greater parental involvement in educational decision-making; and the need for increased integration of services to children in the areas of education, health, and social services.

These pressures have created major inconsistencies for education systems. Systems need to be both big and small: big to realize economies of scale and provide a full range of educational services; small to allow citizens to have a voice in the decisions that affect their children. Systems need to be centralized and decentralized: centralized to provide consistency and some efficiencies; decentralized to ensure community support and responsiveness to local needs. While provincial education systems may desire to control all aspects of education, central control in all matters is not always appropriate and local communities need the autonomy to address local issues (SSTA, 1993, p. 8). Today's reality is many school divisions no longer have sufficient numbers of pupils to support a full range of educational services. The need for further readjustment is apparent, as evidenced by the increased numbers of school divisions currently investigating or undertaking restructuring initiatives.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyse, within the context of organizational theory, the process and management of school division amalgamations. Focusing on mergers and transitions and the management of change, the process of amalgamation and the management of that process were examined and provided a foundation to develop a broader understanding of the complexities and dynamics inherent in school division amalgamations. The primary question for investigation in the case study was: ***With attention to the technical, political and cultural aspects of change management, how did the process of amalgamation unfold and what meaning was ascribed by the participants to the process?***

The research questions that guided the study were:

1. Why did amalgamation become an issue in the school divisions?
2. How did the process of amalgamation unfold?
3. What were the critical incidents in the amalgamation process and how were the issues resolved?
4. What attention was given to the technical, political, and cultural aspects of change during the amalgamation process?
5. What approaches were used to address human resource concerns during the transition?
6. What did the concept of school division amalgamation come to mean to the stakeholder groups?

It was postulated that the exploration of this question would result in a broader understanding of the dynamics of managing change within the amalgamation of school divisions

Significance of the Study

A renewed interest in school division consolidation in Saskatchewan has indicated a need for current information on amalgamation processes. The study should provide information to Boards of Education, administrators, and other decision makers on how to prepare for and manage an amalgamation/merger process. Although the scope of school division mergers or amalgamations may not be on the same scale as corporate mergers, numerous issues are common to both ventures. According to Marks and Mirvis (1992), mergers have occurred for two reasons, "to further strategic purpose and to achieve a global presence" (p. 18). If the strategic purpose of educational organizations is to give children the best possible education, there must be a synergy between the merging organizations so that the goal of providing an appropriate educational opportunity for all students can be realized. This means attending to intertwining two distinct operations and to keeping talented people loyal, motivated, and within the educational system.

To reap the potential benefits of participation in meaningful change is a challenge for administrators and teachers. Meaningful change is time-consuming and requires the participation of people both within and without the educational organization. Furthermore, the critical factors that apply to any amalgamation must be taken into account if potential benefits are to be realized and pitfalls avoided.

While the most common indicator of a successful merger has been financial performance (Cartwright & Cooper, 1994), "increasingly the success of any organizational combination has been gauged by the reactions of the individuals affected" (p. 48). In times of change and transition, it is readily apparent that effective management of the technical, political, and cultural strands of an organization is a necessary ingredient of successful mergers. Therefore, a study of the process of amalgamation, which has, as its particular focus, the management of the event, will be of benefit to those involved in amalgamation efforts. The study should provide information to Boards of Education, administrators, and other decision makers on how to prepare for and support amalgamation efforts.

In addition, much of the literature on school division amalgamation comes to us from the United States and other areas of Canada. There are few, if any, recent case studies on school division amalgamation in Saskatchewan. The renewed interest in school division consolidation in Saskatchewan has indicated a need for current information on amalgamation process management within a provincial context.

As school divisions continue to engage in amalgamation discussions, any meaningful insights into the process and its management could be of assistance to future efforts in this area and contribute to our knowledge of change processes. The findings of the study may also provide a basis for comparisons to be drawn with regard to other amalgamation processes. Attention to managing the technical, political, and cultural strands of change through educational governance reform may assist in providing the youth of Saskatchewan with the "best" education possible, one of appropriate educational opportunity and equality of educational benefit.

Researcher Perspectives

A kaleidoscope of images reminds me of childhood years in rural Saskatchewan—images of building sod huts in the school yard firebreak; sharing our home with the teacher; community bazaars to raise funds for a projector and the amazement and laughter on community "film evenings" as we enjoyed the antics of Charlie Chaplin; Christmas concerts in a one-room schoolhouse filled to overflowing with a stage, excited children, and parents; family field meet days with voucher prizes for licorice jawbreakers and ice-cream cones; the community "beef ring" of pre-electricity days; and cooperative efforts to build an "ice-rink" for our hockey team. Regardless of time or place, my memories are filled with people who were joined by a common bond, an interest in their community.

Current issues such as rural depopulation and perceived threats to the life and values of our farm communities are issues which I can well understand. As an educator and a parent, I have seen changes in both our Saskatchewan way of life and our education

system. Probably, life has never before changed as rapidly as it has in my life experience—from a multi-grade one-room schoolhouse, to viewing the first epic voyage to the moon, to the technological advances which we have come to consider a normal part of our lives. Change continues to dominate all aspects of our lives and present us with challenges.

The challenge of meeting the needs of the approaching millennium, while, at the same time, valuing and accommodating the uniqueness of our rural culture is, I believe, a challenge worth undertaking. To that end, changes in educational governance reform through the amalgamation of school divisions continue to hold my interest, particularly in regard to gaining a better understanding of the affective side of school division mergers. The process of school division amalgamation is one which affects those within the school community. For that reason, attention to the management side of mergers is, I believe, paramount to the success of educational governance reform through amalgamation efforts.

Assumptions

1. It was assumed that the analysis of a school division amalgamation would provide insights into the management of a change process.

2. It was further assumed that a case study research design was appropriate for fulfilling the purpose of the study. Within the delimitations of this study, information obtained from documents together with selected interviews of stakeholder individuals and groups, as well as the researcher's attendance at numerous amalgamation-related meetings provided sufficiently valid data to address the questions formulated for investigation.

3. It was assumed this study addressed qualitative inquiry issues such as researcher bias, multiple realities, and triangulation of data in order for the findings to be trustworthy.

4. It was assumed the participants would be forthright in sharing their perceptions of the phenomenon under study.

Delimitations

1. The study was delimited to two rural Saskatchewan school divisions which had undergone an amalgamation process.

2. The study was delimited in time from the onset of amalgamation considerations to six months into the completed amalgamation. However, the case study was placed within a historical context, both locally and provincially.

3. The topic was delimited to investigate, from an organizational and management perspective, the process of school division amalgamation. To this end, research participants were delimited to those individuals very directly involved in the amalgamation process.

Limitations

1. Information offered during the interviews was limited by the willingness of participants to share information honestly and openly, given that the amalgamation event being both current and political in nature was highly emotive to particular individuals.

2. Conclusions reached were limited by the documentary data and the viewpoints of those interviewed and did not encompass the views of other interested groups or individuals.

3. The findings of the study are limited to both time and place. In view of the fact that post-amalgamation change and transitions within both the organization and individuals continue to transpire in the "new" school division, additional information and conclusions might have been developed if the amalgamation process had been followed for an increased length of time.

4. As the study focused on one unique case or instance of school division amalgamation within a provincial context, there were limitations on the extent to which generalizations could be drawn from the study. This case study did not address issues which could arise in other amalgamation initiatives.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined:

Amalgamation— the combining or merging of two or more distinct entities. For the purposes of this study, amalgamation will refer to the merging of two or more school divisions into one new administrative unit. Terms synonymous to amalgamation are consolidation and reorganization.

Board of Education— the elected board of education of a school division (The Education Act, 1995, c. E-0.2).

Director—a director of education appointed by a board of education (The Education Act, 1995, c E-0.2), also referred to as district administrator (LaRoque, 1986), or superintendent. In this study, the term "director of education" or "director" will be used.

First order change—quantitative, mechanical, situational, and occurring at a particular point in time; a linear change within the same state of being (Levy, 1986, p. 11).

Managed change—"the organization's attempts to manage uncertainty via the decisions of leadership in the technical, political, and cultural areas" (Tichy, 1983, p. 18); the way in which managers can plan and implement the change.

Mergers/acquisitions—the act of merging; combination; the act or process of acquiring.

Organizational change—structural, economic, technical, or demographic; can be planned and managed on a rational model (Bridges, 1986, p. 25).

Planned change—the way in which internal and external experts can help the organization plan and implement change (Levy, 1986, p. 6).

Public school division—a school division other than a separate school division (The Education Act. 1995, c. E-0.2). The term school division is synonymous to school

district in other parts of Canada and throughout the United States (Economic Service Bulletin, 1994; Haller & Monk, 1988).

Restructuring—the redrawing of school governance boundaries, within the context of an amalgamation process.

Second order change—qualitative, both planned and unplanned, a cycle of developmental stages: decline, transformation, transition, and stabilization/development (Levy, 1986, pp. 13-14).

Stakeholders —groups or individuals which have a vested interest in the issue of school division amalgamation. For the purposes of this study, the identified stakeholder groups will consist of Boards of Education, local school trustees, ratepayers, parents, students, support staff, and teachers.

Strategic change—"nonroutine, nonincremental, and discontinuous change which alters the overall orientation of the organization and/or components of the organization" (Tichy, 1983, p. 17).

Transition—"a three-part psychological process that extends over a period of time and cannot be planned or managed by the same rational formulae that work with change," as opposed to the definition for organizational change (Bridges, 1986, p. 25); a change or passage from one condition, place, form, or stage to another (Gage, 1983); *being in* a state of transition.

Trustee—a member of a board of trustees or a member of a board of education (The Education Act, 1995, c. E-0.2). In this study, trustee will refer to local school board members and board member will refer to a board of education member.

Organization of the Dissertation

In this chapter, a statement of the problem of the study, the background to the study, the purpose and significance of the study, the researcher's perspective, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and the definition of terms were outlined. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature related to change, mergers, organizational transition and educational governance reform, and an explanation of the theoretical framework underlying the study. The setting and the research methodology, including the instrumentation, sampling, data collection, and data analysis is introduced in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, a history and background of educational governance reform in both Saskatchewan and the research site is presented, thus providing the reader with the context of the study. Chapter 5 offers the findings to the research question. In Chapter 6, one finds a summary of the educational research study, a discussion of the findings, conclusions, recommendations for more proactive and effective management of the process of school division amalgamations, suggestions for further research, and implications for theory.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The intent of this chapter is to provide a review of scholarly writing within the construct of organizational behaviour and the management of change. The chapter begins with a summary of organizational change, first and second-order planned change, the driving forces for change, the content of change, and the process and stages of planned second-order organizational change. This is followed by a discussion of mergers and acquisitions with a focus on merger typologies, the human resource perspective as it relates to the management of organizational transition, and issues of leadership. The chapter concludes with thoughts on the relationship between the management of organizational transition and educational governance reform as well as the conceptual framework of the study.

Organizational Change

Nowhere has change been more evident than in the recent restructuring of organizations in both the private and public sector. Whether this restructuring occurred under the guise of mergers, consolidations, amalgamations, or downsizing, an extensive body of literature on organizational change and transition has been developed by organizational theorists. Traditional response modes such as downsizing, piecemeal structural and process rearrangements, and incremental change are proving to be inadequate in solving today's organizational challenges (Nevis, Lancourt, & Vassallo, 1996). Bolman and Deal (1997, 2nd edition) described this problematic as:

> The challenge of finding the right way to frame our world has always been difficult, but it has become overwhelming in the turbulent and complicated world of the twentieth century. Forms of management and organization serviceable a few years back are now obsolete. Serieyx (1993, p. 14) calls it the "organizational big bang." (p. 5)

The challenge of searching out new ways in which to frame organizations so as to successfully manage change is vital to the growth and development of both the organization and the individuals within the workplace.

Reframing—A Paradigmatic Change

The turbulent environment within which we live, as well as the complexity of change, requires multiple, interrelated discontinuous change (Nevis et al., 1996, p. 6). In other words, in order to change, major shifts in our beliefs—our mental models or paradigms (Senge, 1990), whether personal or within the context of an organizational structure, are necessary to create lasting change. As noted by Nevis et al. (1996) some of the major paradigm shifts are: from stability to continuous change; from change as disruption to change as normal; from local, point solutions to integrated, systemic solutions; from one right solution to multiple possible solutions; from individuality and competition to cooperation and collaboration; from hierarchical control to flatter, flexible networks; from managers and controllers to coaches, servants, and catalysts; and from leaders as generals to leaders as servants (p. 6). The interconnectedness and behavioral implications of these paradigm shifts reveal that "inherent in the new paradigm is the need to build into the way the work is organized a capacity for flexibility and continuous change" (p.10). Similarly, Bolman and Deal (1997) viewed the ability to see old problems in a new light, rather than being trapped in a "psychic prison" (p. 5), as an issue of *reframing* the structural, political, human resource, and symbolic realities or organizational frames in order to reach a new understanding of the situation and possible solutions, the end result being an improved organization.

In concurrence with these thoughts, Kuhn (1970), identified several invisible restraints which prevent organizations from moving forward: organizational paradigms or their intellectual gestalts determine what organizations see and do not see and, as a result, organizations are inherently self-perpetuating and resistant to change; people become

emotionally as well as intellectually attached to paradigms for reasons of certainty, identification, and security needs (Legare, 1998); and paradigms are shared constructs which are communally approved and reinforced. A paradigm shift is not a modification of an existing reality; it is the "acceptance of a contradictory framework...inherently wrenching and difficult" (Nevis et al., 1996, p. 11), and requires an understanding of change and the change process.

Planned and Managed Change

In order to understand the phenomenon of school division amalgamation, it is necessary to draw a distinction between planned and managed change. The manner in which one manages a change influences the planned change. Both Bennis, Benne and Chin's (1969) *planned change* and Tichy's (1983) *managed change* commonly refer to changes deliberately shaped by various organization members. "*Planned change* usually refers to the way in which internal and external experts can help the organization ... plan and implement changes, [while] *managed change* refers to the way in which managers can plan and implement change" (Levy, 1986, p. 6). With this definition in mind, Levy identified characteristics of planned change as: (a) a deliberate, purposeful, and explicit decision to engage in a program of change; (b) a reflection of a process of change; (c) involving external or internal professional guidance; and (d) generally involving a strategy of collaboration and power sharing (power derived from knowledge, skills, and competencies) between the change agent and the client system (pp. 6-7). Planned change has both intentional or explicitly planned for and realized or emerged out of the situation aspects. Managed change, on the other hand, has implications for the process of the planned change.

Perspectives on First and Second-Order Change

Because school division amalgamations deal with cultural aspects of change, a review of various writers' perspectives on first and second-order change is included in the literature review. Although broad in nature, Smith (1982) set forth a basic framework for distinguishing between the two types of change. Using a biological metaphor, Smith stated:

> *Morphostasis* [a first order change] encompasses two types of change . . . [change] that enables things to look different while remaining basically as they have always been...[and change that] occurs as a natural expression of the developmental sequence,...the natural maturation process. *Morphogenes* [a second-order change]...penetrates so deeply into the genetic code that all future generations acquire and reflect those changes....The change has occurred in the very essence, in the core, and nothing special needs to be done to keep the change changed. (p. 318)

Various disciplines have offered descriptions of first and second-order change. Keeping the above definitions in mind and based on Levy's (1986) review, the following summarization of dichotomous terms and definitions for first and second-order change includes the selected areas of management, creative thinking, planned change, organization theory, and learning theory. In the area of management, Lindblom (1959, p. 79) described *branch change* as "successive limited comparisons that continually build out of the current situation, step-by-step and by small degrees" vs. *root change*, "a rational comprehensive approach starting from the fundamentals anew each time, building on the past only as experience is embodied in theory and always prepared to start from the ground up." *Executive change* "gives effect to policies by maintaining the course of affairs in line with governing relations, norms, and standards" while *policy-making change* is directed to "forming the governing relations which assume, express, and create a whole new system of values" (Vickers, 1965, p.27). Finally, Sheldon (1980, p. 64) compared *normal change* as "the fit between the organization and its environment and among its components is rarely perfect, so...organizations are constantly tinkering with one dimension or another"

to *paradigm change* which "involves several or all dimensions at once ... [a] radical change in world and world view."

A creative thinker, De Bono (1971) determined that *vertical change* "seeks to establish continuity, one thing must follow directly from another" while *lateral* change "works with the hope that a better pattern can be arrived at by restructuring; it seeks to introduce discontinuity" (pp. 4, 9-10). Planned change theorists, on the other hand, described the phenomenon of change as: (a) *evolutionary change*, "the modest adjustments necessary for maintaining growth under the same overall pattern of management" vs. *revolutionary change*, "the serious upheavals and abandonment of past management practices involving finding a new set of organizational practices that will become the basis for managing the next period of evolutionary growth" (Greiner, 1972, p. 40); (b) *rational change* which "does not change its internal structure at all because it does not question the fundamental assumptions upon which it is based" vs. *radical change*, "a paradigm shift and system change" (Grabow & Heskin, 1973, p. 8; Want, 1995); and (c) *incremental change*, a "step by step movement or variations in degree along an established conceptual continuum or system framework...it is intended to do more of the same but better" vs. *transformational change*—"a variation in kind that involves reconceptualization and discontinuity from the initial system" (Kindler, 1979, p. 478).

In the area of organization theory, *linear quantitative changes* "occur within a steady state; they tend to be gradual and readily predictable" while *nonlinear qualitative changes* "disrupt a steady state; they tend to be abrupt and difficult to predict" (Putney, cited in Levy, 1986, p. 8). Yet another author, Skibbins (1974, pp. 4-7), described *homeostasis* as a state in which the "internal and external forces are nearly in equilibrium. The managers operate with limited short-range goals and tend to run such systems pretty much as they are" vs. *radical change* which has "large scale processes that occur within a

single organization; like caterpillars turn into butterflies, the organization retains its identity yet is transformed into something new."

Writing from a learning theory perspective, Argyris and Schon (1978), defined *single-loop learning* as permitting "the organization to carry its present policies or achieve its present objectives." On the other hand, *double-loop learning* "involves the modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies, and objectives" (pp. 2-3).

While scholars in different disciplines have employed a variety of terms to describe first and second-order changes, regardless which dichotomy is used, characteristics of first-order change include changes in one or a few dimensions, levels, and behavioural aspects, while second-order change addresses multi-dimensional and multi-level change as well as change in all the behavioural aspects: attitudes, norms, values, perceptions, beliefs, world view, and behaviours. First-order change is quantitative, a change in content, developmental and incremental in a linear direction, reversible, logical and rational, and occurs within the same world view or paradigm and the old state of being. In contrast, second-order change is qualitative, a change in context, revolutionary and taking a new direction, irreversible, seemingly irrational, and takes place within a new paradigm and a new state of thinking and acting (Levy, 1986, p. 11). Encapsulating these differences and simplifying the compendium of definitions offered, Anderson and Kyprianou (1994) wrote:

> The depth of intervention in [a] structured attempt to manage change may be seen beyond the levels of the people, task, or organization...a 'deep change strategy' [which] attempts to change people's values...[while] a 'shallow change strategy'...is more open and based on structures, ideas, technologies, etc. (p. 212)

It is this "depth of intervention" in a structured management of change which is the cornerstone and lies at the very heart of a successful merging of organizational cultures and values.

Organizational Change and Transition

Bridges' (1986) definitions of *organizational change* and *transition* are somewhat synonymous to definitions of first and second-order planned change. The terms, *change* and *transition*, although frequently used interchangeably, are defined by Bridges (1986) as follows:

> *Organizational change* is structural, economic, technological, or demographic, and it can be planned and managed on a...rational model...*Transition*, on the other hand, is a three-part psychological process that extends over a...period of time and cannot be planned or managed by the same rational formulae that work with *change*. (p. 25)

In other words, change occurs when something that used to happen in one way starts happening in another; change frequently starts with a new beginning. Change is mechanical, situational, and occurs at a particular point in time. In contrast, transition—a dynamic people process, is the "gradual psychological process through which individuals and groups reorient themselves so...they can function and find meaning in a changed situation" (Bridges, 1991, 1992, p. 17). Although organizational changes can be mandated, transitions cannot.

Transitions do not "just occur." According to Bridges (1986, p. 25), "Transition *must* [emphasis added] start with an ending-with people letting go of old attitudes and behaviours." Change requires individuals to make transitions, although, it may well be the transition rather than the change itself that is both difficult and chaotic (Astrachan, 1990; Towers Perrin, 1999). As the English novelist, John Galsworthy wrote, "the beginnings...of all human undertakings are untidy" (1933, p. 4). Bridges listed several assumptions which, in his view, accompany change: (a) change begets change and at every step people are plunged into transitions; (b) it is not enough to define the objective that an organizational change is meant to achieve and the plan for getting there. One must also, like Moses in the wilderness, guide people through the transition, that ambiguous gap

between the old and the new; and (c) a genuine new beginning carries with it an element of unpredictability (pp. 18-22). Given that the ability to change frequently and rapidly is a requirement for survival in today's world and that successful change requires numerous transitions, transition management is a key executive/administrative skill.

Dealing successfully with transitions can only be accomplished by trying to understand the subjective "realities" of the people who are affected. As outlined by Bridges (1992), factors which shape a human being's subjective world are: personal history; collective history from within the organization; cultural values; temperament, an inherent way of perceiving and evaluating experience; gender, women may be more relation-oriented, men more process-oriented; and life phase (pp. 27-29). One can look at the cycle of human development as a cycle of worlds or realities—our world, as we perceive it, is different at sixteen than it is at thirty, or forty, or sixty. Indeed, our worlds or realities are shaped throughout our life in a natural evolutionary process as well as by the impact of our external environments. As such, resistance to transition is a completely natural act of self-preservation. By their very nature, mental models, or paradigms, are self-perpetuating and resistant to change (Nevis et al., 1996). As has been demonstrated many times in history, "the old form has to collapse into chaos before the new form can take shape" (p. 31). The mental model or paradigm under which an organization operates displays an inherent tendency to resist change (Davenport, 1998; Legare, 1998). In spite of this, "belief systems can be changed, if their benefits are clearly demonstrated and continually reinforced" (Clemente & Greenspan, 1999, p. 3).

Organizational Resistance to Change

Any individuals who have attempted to "reorganize an office, a department, or a whole company [know] about...'resistance to change'" (Bridges, 1992, p. 17). Dealing with this resistance to change is, however, another matter and requires an understanding of the reasons for resistance. Both Tichy(1983) and Tichy and Devanna (1986) discussed

reasons for organizational resistance to change, categorizing the reasons as technical, political, and cultural: (a) technical reasons include habit and inertia, fear of the unknown or loss of organizational predictability, and the sunk cost of the organization's resources in the old ways; (b) political reasons include threats to powerful coalitions, zero sum decision-making resulting from limitations on resources, and the indictment of leadership problems; and (c) cultural reasons include cultural filters resulting in selective perception, regression to the good old days, and lack of climate for change (pp. 72-84).

In a similar vein, Bolman and Deal (1997, pp. 320-323) applied their human resource, structural, political, and symbolic frames to the identification of barriers to change and essential strategies to deal with the barriers. Within the human resource frame, barriers of anxiety, uncertainty, feelings of incompetence, and neediness require the essential strategies of training to develop new skills, participation and involvement, and psychological support. Within the structural frame, barriers to change include loss of clarity and stability, confusion, and chaos. These barriers can be addressed through essential strategies of communication and the realigning and renegotiating of formal patterns and policies. Within the political frame, barriers of disempowerment as well as conflict between winners and losers call for a strategy which creates arenas where issues are renegotiated and new coalitions formed. Within the symbolic frame, barriers to change such as loss of meaning and clinging to the past require the essential strategies of creating transition rituals, mourning the past, and celebrating the future.

In order to overcome an organization's defensive routines, Legare (1998) chose to apply an organizational learning approach based on Argyris and Schon's (1978) definition of first and second-order change. In times of rapid change and uncertainty, influences from one's life experiences can give rise to unconscious defence mechanisms resulting in misunderstandings and the distortion of information. Legare proposed that organizations can learn new values and behaviors that will begin to interrupt organizational defensive routines. Encouraging double-loop learning will result in creating original learning

processes and systems in ways that persist. This organizational learning approach was viewed as a means to understand and resolve interpersonal management issues resulting from the misalignment of organizations, teams, and individuals.

In summary, major organizational change affects individuals' ability to feel effective, valued, and in control; disrupts existing roles and working relationships; creates conflict between winners and losers; and causes a loss of meaning for those on the receiving end of change. As pointed out by Bolman and Deal (1997, p. 339), "Effective change requires a well-orchestrated, integrated design that responds to needs for learning, realignment, negotiation, and grieving." In order to move toward effective change, it is necessary to examine and understand the substantive aspects of second-order change.

Why: Driving Forces of Second-Order Change

Paradigmatic change is not something individuals usually request. Indeed, a change may be well underway, in "full swing," before it is recognized for what it is. Discussing the issues and pressures for continued change, Lundberg (1984) proposed a classificatory scheme which guided Levy's (1986) categorization of the driving forces for change: (a) *permitting conditions*, aspects of the internal organizational situation that permit transformation to occur; (b) *enabling conditions*, external conditions that increase the likelihood for transformation to occur; (c) *precipitating conditions*; and (d) *triggering events* (p. 12). See Table 1 for a summary of Levy's (1986, pp. 12-13) categorization of driving forces for change. This summary, based on Levy's survey of empirical and case studies can be applied to an examination of change in institutions and other organizations. It is, however, worth noting that "even in relatively friendly situations...there is still likely to be passive resistance to organizational changes, new policies and procedures, and what the...organization...is attempting to accomplish" (Buono & Bowditch, 1989, p. 71). In addition, leaders need to acknowledge the influence and constraints of culture on

Table 1

Driving Forces for Change

DRIVING FORCE	EXAMPLES
Permitting Conditions	.Gathering surplus resources for managing the change, such as managerial time, energy, financial resources. .Readiness and willingness of the dominant coalition (managers' and members') to endure change, its anxiety and anticipated uncertainty. .Transformational leadership, capable of providing new vision, aligning members with this vision, mobilizing energy and commitment to realization of the vision.
Enabling Conditions	.Degree of threat to the organization's survival posed by competitors, economic situation, consumers. .Degree of tolerance for the transformation of metasystems. .Degree of radicalness of change, increased incongruence between system and domain increases transformation risks.
Precipitating Conditions	.Tendency of organizations to grow quantitatively and qualitatively. .Dissatisfaction by organizational members, the emergence of new unmet needs. .Pressure of stakeholders with vested interests- consumers, clients, claimants both inside and outside the organization. .Real and perceived crisis. .Unexpected greater or lesser level of organizational performance.
Triggering Events	.Environmental events creating calamity, such as: sharp recessions, unexpected innovations by competitors, natural disasters. .Environmental events creating opportunity, such as: new market niches, availability of finance, and technological breakthroughs. .Major unresolved conflict/ crisis caused by major management shakeup or blunder. .New manager or management team with new vision and ideas. . A "coup d'etat" in the organization or its metasystem. .Political interference- new or changes in legislation. .Corporate merger, acquisition, or takeover.

Note. From "Second-order Planned Change: Definition and Conceptualization," by A. Levy, 1986, *Organizational Dynamics, 15* (1), pp. 5-20.

organizations. An analyses of the beliefs, values, and assumptions on which the respective cultures are based will serve to remove barriers and problems for the merged entity. While management literature suggests that most people will support organizational change if they can understand the need for it and participate in the change, there are limits to what people are ready and able to assimilate (p. 163).

What: The Content of Second-Order Change

Having examined the forces influencing second-order change, we now turn to literature on the content of second-order change. Levy (1986, pp. 15-17) identified four basic perspectives on the content of second-order change. Classified according to theoretical perspective, the change elements, the changed dimension, and the level of awareness of the existence and function of these elements, the four perspectives are: (a) a *systems* perspective in which the changed elements consisting of input, output, and throughput processes result in the highly visible changed dimension of core or functioning processes, "organizational structure, management, through put and decision-making processes, recognition and rewards, and communication patterns" (p. 17); (b) a *management* perspective views the changed elements as goals, objectives, policies, and strategies for their achievement, resulting in a changed dimension of organizational mission and purpose with its attendant medium visibility; (c) a *planned change* perspective involves norms, values, beliefs, symbolic action and elements, the arrangement of the physical setting, and the style of management and relationships, resulting in a changed dimension of organizational culture and a low level of awareness; and (d) an *evolution* perspective encompasses the changed elements of context, template, metarules, and world view, resulting in a largely unnoticed organizational paradigm change—a change in the "underlying assumptions that unnoticeably shape perceptions, procedures, and behaviors" (p. 16).

Levy (1986) has suggested that "each level is embedded in and shaped by higher levels and can be organized in a 'nested framework' "(p. 17), the outer frame being the paradigm, followed by mission, culture, and core process. The changed dimensions of core process, culture, mission, and paradigm can be present in a variety of arrangements. For example, changing the organizational paradigm will entail changes in the organizational mission, culture, and core process while changes in mission will entail changes in culture and core process, but not necessarily in the organizational paradigm. Levy's conclusion is that "second-order change is basically a paradigmatic change . . . a change in all four dimensions—in core processes, in culture, in mission, and in organizational world view or paradigm" (Levy, 1986, pp. 18-19). Levy proposed that the organizational paradigm provides the logic and context for the organizational purpose, culture, and operations and the less visible the dimension, the deeper the change. In addition, an open-systems perspective was used to make Levy's model of the process of second order change more dynamic and open to feedback loops that affect conditions, processes, and change strategies. In his model, "the driving forces for change can also be seen as input, while the process of change can be seen as throughput, and the change in the organizational paradigm as output" (p. 19).

Although Bolman and Deal's (1997, p.15) "reframing organizations" model does not deal specifically with the process and content of second-order planned change, their perspective on organizations complements organizational change theory. The four frames, structural, human resource, political, and symbolic can be described metaphorically as factory or machine, family, jungle, and theatre. Upon viewing "organizations as multiple realities" (p. 266) one can examine or reframe any process or event through each of the four lenses, thus providing for, within each frame, the planning of specific objectives, the application of a variety of decision-making approaches, reorganizing, evaluating, the airing of conflict and renegotiation of symbolic meanings, goal setting, communication, meetings, and motivation (pp. 267-268). When individuals view the same event through

different lenses, their multiple realities produce confusion and conflict. Reframing the event in any or all four frames increases an organization's capabilities of dealing with chaos and change. Matching and/or integrating the correct frame(s) to a situation involves a combination of analysis, intuition and artistry.

In the interest of managing change strategically, Tichy (1983) proposed a conceptual framework that addressed the technical, political, and cultural problems that require continuous attention in organizations. As described by Tichy (1982, pp. 59-62), a number of external pressures affect organizations and may precipitate change. Technical pressures such as intense world competition, uncertainty because of inflation or deflation, low capital investment, fluctuating interest rates, a shift to a service economy, and high technological change in communications and computer technology are often tied into a short-term management focus. These environmental forces tend to be systemic and self-perpetuating, leading to tighter controls and more short-term pressures. Political pressures include problems relating to the uneven distribution of wealth, the lack of integrative mechanisms for the resolution of world disputes, pluralisms— the haves and have nots, conflicts arising from government policies, and the continuing democratization of the work place. Cultural pressures encompass issues such as a decline in work ethics and increased hedonism, pressures for fulfilment at work, changing sexual and family mores, new definitions of equity, the demographics of an older work force, and the non-traditional expectations of the baby-boomer generation.

The technical, political, and cultural systems as described by Tichy (1982) represent fundamental areas that require continuous attention in organizations. The solving of technical problems engage management in goal setting, strategy formulation, and organizational design. Political problems, dealing with allocating power and resources, "are reflected in the resolution of compensation problems, career decisions, budget decisions, and decisions about the organization's internal power struggle" (p. 63.) It is important to pay attention to strategic political issues, particularly during a time of

organizational change. Finally, organizations develop cultures that reflect their members' dominant norms and values. While these cultures may evolve informally, organizations must "determine what norms and values should be held by its members" (p. 63).

Organizations are continually undergoing shifts and changes and Tichy (1982) argued that, in such times of uncertainty, organizations must attempt to reduce or manage uncertainty in the technical, political, and cultural areas:

> Examples include technical uncertainty about markets, production capability, and innovation: political uncertainties about succession candidates, power distributions, and reward allocations; and cultural uncertainties about appropriate value systems for the organization or conflicting value systems. (p. 64)

While each of these areas can be addressed individually, they are also interdependent and problem-solving must be coordinated among them. The need for reducing or managing organizational uncertainty can be addressed, to a great extent, through alignment of its organization's components: "its mission and strategy, its structure, and its human resources—within the....technical, political, and cultural systems" (p. 66). To this end, Tichy proposed a strategic management matrix which used the managerial tools of mission and strategy, organization structure, and human resources management to address technical, political, and cultural systems within an organization (see Appendix A). By clearly diagnosing what areas of the matrix need alignment, specific change strategies can then be developed. In addition, Tichy viewed human resources management as central to implementing the needed cultural and political changes in organizations.

How: Process and Stages of Second-Order Organizational Change

A multiplicity of paradigms or personal world views exist with regard to the process or stages undertaken when implementing second-order organizational change. Indicative of this multiplicity of realities is the ongoing interest of organizational theorists as they continue to explore and write in the area of organizational change. Although this

review of writers' perspectives presents a variety of descriptors, all of the terms used address the process and/or stages of planned second-order change.

Wallace (1956) described the stages of successful cultural transformations as steady state, distortion, revitalisation and reformulation, transformation, and routinization. Kuhn's (1970) scientific revolution perspective used the descriptors of normal science, growth of anomalies, crisis, revolution, and normal science within a new paradigm. Adams and Spencer's (1988) creative process included the stages of preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification.

A more recent perspective on second-order change was offered by Reger, Mullane, Gustafson, and DeMarie (1994) who proposed that, rather than implementing fundamental change through past prescriptions of either incremental or revolutionary processes, change is a "tectonic process" (p. 31). Their premise is based on the use of a "seismic metaphor: organizational inertia is overcome, environmental stress is relieved, and outdated beliefs are destroyed while a new organizational identity is rebuilt on the foundation of the unique, enduring, and positive attributes of the organization" (p. 31). In other words, the change is large enough to overcome organizational inertia, the magnitude of the change falls within the organization's change acceptance zone, and the cataclysmic side effects of massive revolutions are avoided (p. 37).

Heifetz' (1993) seven-stage process for successful change within organizations applied a framework of desired outcomes, actions, and issues and barriers to overcome toward each stage of his change cycle. His change cycle included the stages of choosing the target, setting goals, initiating action, making connections, rebalancing to accommodate the change, consolidating the learning, and moving to the next cycle (pp. 6-28).

Adams and Spencer (1988, pp. 61-62) proposed that the intensity of a transition experience is determined by such factors as novelty, the degree of surprise; clarity of expectations; stage of life; number of transitions an individual may be experiencing

simultaneously; accepting the significance of our change; self-awareness of oneself; and time boundedness or the elasticity of the transition sequence. Adams and Spencer equated their view of transition stages to a "morale curve" (p. 62) which described the back and forth shifts people experience in mood, morale, and sense of self-worth: destabilizing and losing focus, minimizing the impact, questioning self-worth, letting go of the past, testing the new situation, searching for meaning, and integrating their experience (pp. 62-63).

A similar concept is reflected in Lawrie's (1990) model of stages in the change process which charts productivity or morale throughout the transition process. At the time at which change occurs, levels of productivity or morale begin to drop. During the transition period, these levels begin an upward climb that eventually results in a new and increased level of productivity or morale.

Conducting training programs for employees was McKnight and Thompson's (1990, pp. 47-48) solution to navigating and supporting organizational change. The objectives of the program were to acknowledge the reality of the change, to develop an understanding of the psychological aspects of managing transition, and to develop skills for coping effectively with change. The program was directed at helping employees cope gracefully with the change, rather than giving information on the changes.

Nevis et al. (1996) addressed the problematic of managing a transformational change process within organizations through the development of a three-dimensional model. The first dimension dealt with the major phases of the change: traditional, exploratory, generative, and internalization. The second dimension addressed the methods of influence that are identified as useful in acceptance of and in carrying out the change work. Strategies for resocialization included persuasive communication, participation, expectancy, role modelling, extrinsic rewards, structural rearrangement, and coercion. The last dimension handled the management of resistance or the management of multiple realities through strategies which legitimated diverse perceptions, enriched solutions, and reduced resistance (p. 34). The basic premise of their model was that "all three dimensions

operate in an interactive, holistic fashion. For transformation to be successful, managing the interplay between and among the dimensions is critical" (p. 33). Describing each of these dimensions in great detail, the writers approached the construct of discontinuous, paradigmatic change through the resocialization process of the organization's members as central to transformational change (p.35).

In order to manage change, Tichy (1983) believed managers will be required to confront basic questions with regard to the technical, political, and cultural arenas of organizations. These questions include: technical—What business(es) should we be in? How should we be organized to accomplish our strategy? What kinds of people do we need, and how will they be acquired, developed, and rewarded?; political—Who gets to influence the mission and strategy of the organization? How is power allocated both vertically and horizontally across the organization? Who gets promoted to what key positions?; and cultural—What values and beliefs are necessary to support the organization's strategy? What subcultures are desirable, and how should there be an overarching corporate culture? How should the human resources system shape and mold the culture? (p. 80).There is no doubt that questions of this nature need to be addressed during times of change. Attention to these areas while managing any process of change, and, in particular, school division amalgamation, will benefit the resulting "new" organization.

Offering another perspective, both Fullan (1991, pp. 47-48) and Huberman and Miles (1984) envisioned an educational change process as moving through the phases of initiation— mobilization or adoption; implementation— initial use; continuation— incorporation, institutionalization, or routinization; and outcome.

Levy's (1986) discussion of second-order change is particularly applicable to this phenomenological study of school division amalgamation, drawing a distinction between second-order change and second-order planned change. From a theoretical or empirical perspective, second order-change is characterized by decline and crisis, unsuccessful first

order changes, chaos, demise, discontinuity, reframing, and the discovery or creation of a new vision. The second perspective of planned and managed second-order change recognizes that, in real life situations, a new order is not rapidly established but takes time, energy, and resources; the process of transformation can be facilitated and managed by the organization's members; and, understanding principals of organizational evolution allow for the development of strategies and technologies which enhance participation in the process (p. 13).

Levy (1986) described second-order change, both planned and unplanned, as a cycle of developmental stages. *Decline*, typified by unmet needs, denial of warning signals for radical reorganization, failed efforts to cope with problems by first-order change, crisis, chaos, resistance to change, and anger, indicated the system had reached a critical point of demise or revitalization. *Transformation*, characterized by the process of "letting go" of old beliefs and habits, included acceptance of the need for change, discontinuity from the past, commitment to change, creating or discovering new realities, sudden shifts in perception, and the emergence of a new direction. *Transition*, focused on assessing solutions and their impact and managing the transition, was exemplified by planned and managed efforts to translate ideas or visions into action steps, programs, structures, and procedures. *Stabilization* and *development*, the institutionalization of the change program, involved fine tuning, maintenance, and development through first-order changes (pp. 13-14). Somewhat similar to Levy's stages of transformation, transition and development, Bridges (1986, 1991, 1992) described the organizational transition process as moving through three on-going phases: endings, a neutral zone, and new beginnings.

Iterative Phases of Organizational Transition

Having drawn on Bridges' (1986, 1991, 1992) perspectives on the process and managing of transitions as part of the conceptual framework of this study, the writer includes the following summary of Bridges' work in the area of organizational transition.

In Bridges' (1991) opinion, change is situational and external; transition is psychological and internal; and, unless transition occurs, change will not work (pp. 3-4). Learning to manage transitions may prevent the changes from becoming unmanageable. Therefore, the first step towards transition management is to understand the phases of transition—endings, the neutral zone, and new beginnings.

Endings

Change requires people and organizations to make transitions, and transition "must start with an *ending*—with people letting go of old attitudes and behaviours" (Bridges, 1992, p. 18; McCann & Gilkey, 1988; Tichy & Devanna, 1986). Every change causes loss, loss of attachments, turf, structure, a future, meaning, and control (Tichy, 1983, pp. 40-49). Coming to important endings in our lives is similar to experiencing loss through a death and the mourning which follows an ending (Kubler-Ross, 1969). Feelings of loss have three aspects: *disengagement*, a separation of the person from the subjective world one knows; *disidentification*, loss of a sense of one's identity in the former situation; and *disenchantment*, a breakdown of one's meaning-making capacity (Bridges, pp. 27-28). As more integration and consolidation occurs, feelings of insignificance can become contagious and spread rapidly (Kerfoot, 1998). Dealing with loss includes expecting and allowing for behaviours closely associated with mourning such as denial, anger, bargaining, grief, and despair before acceptance; encouraging training opportunities; life and career-planning; the beginning of a new identity; and acknowledging the disenchantment of individuals through direct communication and efforts to correct the disenchantment situation (pp. 27-29). To this end, Bridges (1991) offered specific suggestions with regard to "how to get them to let go" (p. 19). These suggestions included identify who's losing what, don't be surprised at overreaction, acknowledge the losses openly and sympathetically, expect and accept the signs of grieving, compensate for the losses, and give people information and do it again and again. In addition, Bridges

suggested organizations need to define what's over and what isn't, mark the endings, treat the past with respect, let people take a piece of the old way with them, and show how endings ensure continuity of what really matters (pp. 20-32). As Bridges so succinctly stated:

> The single biggest reason organizational change fails is that no one thought about endings or planned to manage their impact on people.... [Managers] forget that while the first task of *change management* is to understand the destination and how to get there, the first task of *transition management* is to convince people to leave home. You'll save yourself a lot of grief if you remember that. (p. 32)

Transition management presents individuals with both the means and opportunity to deal with changed structures and modes of operation. Transition management acknowledges the impact of disengagement, disidentification, and disenchantment experienced by people in times of loss.

The Neutral Zone

According to Bridges (1986) the concept of "a shift from the old task of letting go to the new task of crossing the *neutral zone*" is a reality which the Western mind has difficulty acknowledging. Rather than viewing the neutral zone as empty and something to be filled with the right content, a North American perception, the neutral zone is best described by the Japanese word *ma*, the necessary pause in waiting for the right moment of action (p. 19). Making sense of this neutral zone commences with accepting this period of organizational transition as a time of disorientation and disintegration during which we break away from the social forces of our old reality, put aside popular assumptions, and allow ourselves or the organization to find a new identity, to engage in a "vision quest" (Bridges, pp. 29-30; Tichy & Devanna, 1986, p. 69). Readying an organization for its own renewal (Tichy & Devanna, 1986) requires a process of diagnosis which includes framing the problem, collecting data, and reducing complexities to a few central issues to be

considered (pp. 116-120). Specific suggestions offered by Bridges (1986) for managing the neutral zone successfully included: recognize the difficulty of this phase while welcoming it as a creative time, normalize the neutral zone, create temporary systems to give structure and strength, strengthen intragroup connections, use a transition monitoring team (Ward & Rossettie, 1998), and use the neutral zone creatively, capitalizing on its opportunity to do things differently and better (pp. 34-46). This apparently uneventful phase, the "muddle in the middle," allows for a significant change within both individuals and organizations, "a kind of inner 'sorting' process" (p. 46) which accompanies transformational change.

New Beginnings

Ending the organizational transition process with a *new beginning* built upon the new orientation and identity that has emerged in the neutral zone, the organization's leaders are encouraged to cover "The Four P's: purpose, picture, plan, and part to play" (Bridges, 1991, p. 52). Transformational leaders have an onerous and challenging task. Tichy and Devanna (1986) offered four processes that they believe will serve leader's well in efforts to mobilize positive energy within the organization: summarize the past as a means of closure, justify a change, create continuity between the past and the future, and eulogize the past (pp. 180-181). Bridges (1986, pp. 32-33) cautioned that in trying to create and communicate the "new vision," an organization's leaders must remember a new vision can take root only after the old vision has died and been buried. The culture that develops from a vision will not be a culture with a pattern of total agreement but with a shift in the definition of the opposition and in terms of the dialogue. Vision, an "intuitive function," appeals to the "intuitive types," those who deal with the general shape of the future(p. 32). However, about three-quarters of the employees in most large organizations are "sensation types", those who deal with the details of the present and therefore, the vision must be supplemented by a clear plan (p. 32). People will continue to see the vision

from whatever is their "new" individual reality and will feel overwhelmed "if the vision and the new reality it portrays are very different from current conditions" (p. 32). Zbar (1999) and Hayes (1997) advised personnel who want their job to survive a merger or acquisition to be flexible. For these individuals, their ability to adapt to a new corporate culture is crucial. Maintaining a positive outlook, keeping a focus on the future, and looking on the bright side can help to smooth over the transition.

Efforts at making new beginnings may fall short of the vision and therefore, Weick (1984) recommended a "small wins" principle, the achievement of visible results, although of moderate importance, to encourage the change momentum. Weick's suggestion is reiterated in Bridges' (1991) suggestions for reinforcing the new beginning: be consistent, ensure quick success, symbolize the new identity, and celebrate the success (pp. 60-64). Bridges' use of the metaphor of Moses leading his people to a new home equates leaving Egypt to the "endings" phase, wandering through the wilderness to the "neutral zone," and arriving at their new home as the "new beginnings" phase. As Bridges suggested, if the "change doesn't work" or if it "falls short of our expectations", perhaps it is because "we got the people out of Egypt, but they're still wandering somewhere in the wilderness" (p. 64).

Regardless of individual perspectives, the change process is generally typified as having "the elements of steady state, growth in perturbations, crisis, and revolutionary change" (Levy, 1986, p. 16). Change is a process, not an event. Furthermore, the process is not linear; rather, it is multidimensional and events in one phase can feed back to a previous stage and then proceed to work through the phases in a continuum of action (Fullan, 1991).

Mergers and Acquisitions

An increasingly pervasive response to the phenomenon of continuous and accelerating change has been to engage in some form of "downsizing." Although this generic term is frequently used to describe organizational reconfigurations, other terms used within a similar context are demassing (Bridges, 1992), restructuring (Keidel, 1994) consolidations and amalgamations (Monk & Haller, 1986), reengineering (Keidel, 1994; Nahavandi & Aranda, 1994), reframing (Bolman & Deal, 1997), and mergers and acquisitions (Buono & Bowditch, 1989; Levy, 1986; Napier, 1989). Any type of reconfiguration, regardless of the term in use, is unlikely to be productive if the action is inappropriate for the organization or its context. In response to these terms, many of which carry negative connotations, Hitt, Keats, Harback, and Nixon (1994) coined the term *"rightsizing"* (p. 19) to describe the reconfigurations of relatively successful organizations' actions.

> *Rightsizing* is an integrated, internally consistent and externally legitimated configuration of organizational processes, products, and people based on (1) a shared vision of the future organization and (2) a clearly articulated mission and strategy supported by management, well understood by members of the organization, and in which members have a sense of "ownership." (p. 19)

In their discussion on rightsizing, Hitt et al. identified a number of ineffective downsizing practices that included the implementation of voluntary retirement programs and across-the-board layoffs, the elimination of training and development programs, the too deep reductions of personnel, the placement of survivors in challenging jobs for which they have insufficient skills, and the expectation of survivors to "learn from experience." Hitt et al. also disapproved of the emphasis on employee accountability rather than employee involvement and the expectation that survivors "row harder" (p. 25). The authors' recommended effective reconfiguration practices included reducing the number of layers or levels rather than the number of individual positions, as well as considering

interdependent relationships in the organization before cutting particular positions and, if necessary, restructuring the organization. In regard to right-sizing, Hitt et al. recommended a mind set or paradigm which expends effort to seek the appropriate size and to review this element periodically. Other suggestions included the identification, protection, and mentoring of individuals with strong management/leadership talent; the protection and promotion of the educational program in the organizations; an emphasis on leadership; the decentralization of the organization; the empowerment of key individuals (the survivors); and the development of maximum operating and strategic flexibility. An emphasis on team rather than individual effort, team building among the various units, identifying and protecting core competencies, and continuing to hire, grow, and develop, particularly in critical or priority areas were seen as effective rightsizing practices (pp. 26-27).

Focusing on the right size for an organization represents a difficult, yet positively orientated decision and a commitment to the implementation of effective practices. This suggests a longer term orientation to change and allows an organization to move toward and achieve its vision of the ideal organizational identity. Exercising and nurturing strategic leadership throughout a reconfiguration process entails the ability to integrate short-and long-term visions of the organization, the mentoring of strategic thinking, and the development and maintenance of core competencies. Strategic leadership also encompasses an emphasis on building human capital, sustaining an effective corporate culture, and establishing strategic control (Hitt et al., p. 30). Rightsizing does not guarantee renewed positive performance; strategic leadership and vision are needed to clarify what is the appropriate path to the desired destination.

Understandings of mergers and acquisitions, one of the more commonly recognized forms of "rightsizing," have direct application to the phenomenon of school division amalgamations or mergers. With this application in mind, we turn to a literature-based consideration of the "why, what, and how" of corporate M & A's.

Why: Driving Forces of Mergers and Acquisitions

The literature on motives for business mergers identified the most commonly discussed categories of motives as financial and managerial (Halpern, 1983; Jemison & Sitkin, 1996; Rhoades, 1983). Financial or value-maximizing motives focus on increasing profits, increasing synergies through economies of scale or scope, and applying skills and knowledge from one firm to another. Managerial or non-value maximizing motives address issues of increasing sales or assets growth, increasing managements's prestige or power, and decreasing uncertainty in the firm's external environment. Offering another categorization, Walter (1987) described reasons for mergers as a desire or need for related diversification, increased competitive strength, maximized earnings, and limited risks.

A third viewpoint is offered by Napier (1989) who proposed that motives for merger and the characteristics of the merging firms may suggest a typology in terms of degree of integration—extension, collaborative, or design. In *extension mergers* the acquiring firm essentially leaves the acquired firm alone. *Collaborative or synergy mergers* result when the two firms blend on major operational and managerial functions or exchange knowledge, technology and other talent. *Redesign mergers* imply the adoption of the policies and practices of one firm by the other (pp. 277). Napier suggested that a determination of what type of merger to pursue may help managers of transition plan for and implement human resource practices and policies. These practices and policies, in turn, are related to "merger outcomes, such as financial performance or employee reactions [resulting in] turnovers, satisfaction, performance, or absenteeism" (p. 276). In extension mergers, developed out of non-value maximizing motives, the impact on human resources is likely to be low. On the other hand, collaborative mergers may involve extensive changes on human resource practices as new policies are developed collaboratively or exchanged. In redesign mergers the impact on human resource practices will be dramatic, particularly for the acquired firm as it is molded or reshaped in the image of the other organization (pp. 277-280).

Literature on motives for merger comes primarily from research in the disciplines of finance, economics, and strategic management. While providing a variety of reasons for mergers, much of the literature lacks research on how merger motives affect "careers, reporting relationships, compensation policies for both firms...[or] employee reactions" (Napier, 1989, p. 273). Research has, to a large extent, failed to address the question of what impact merger motives have on the merger's implementation or its effect on human resource aspects. However, Marks and Mirvis (1997) revisited the concept of merger syndrome, first introduced more than 10 years ago. Merger syndrome is a "combination of uncertainty and the likelihood of change, both favorable and unfavorable, that produces stress and, ultimately, affects perceptions and judgements, interpersonal relationships, and the dynamics of the combination itself" (p. 2). Personal signs of the merger syndrome include heightened self-interest, fear of job-loss, psychological and physiological well being evidenced by increasing rates of illness and absenteeism, cynicism and distrust, change wariness, and burnout (pp. 4-6). There is a great deal of uncertainly as to the future and questions abound for which there are no given answers:

> How will reporting relationships be structured in the new organization? Which firm's policies and procedures will be followed? How will pay and benefits be affected? Will decision making practices change? Will previously promised promotions or assignments be honored? How will redundancies in staffs and functions be resolved?" (p. 3)

Marks and Mirvis suggested that, in order to help people manage stress, employees must be moved on both an intellectual and emotional level. Specific actions included developing a vision of a new and better organization, communicating the vision, and valuing each employee's contribution to the organization and its work. Merger sensitization seminars, held as soon as practicable after the merger announcement and a comprehensive merger communications program serve to keep employees informed. Finally, empathy for the pain of dealing with the stress and uncertainty of a merger demonstrates respect for people

and their situation and indicates that leaders know what people are going through as well as generating employee respect for an insightful and informed leadership (pp. 7-10).

Furthermore, analogies can be drawn between corporate mergers and acquisitions and school division amalgamations. However, it is important to recognize that the organizational structures, settings, and cultures of public institutions such as those found within educational systems are somewhat different from the structures, settings, and cultures of business corporations.

What: Typologies of Mergers

An examination of literature in the area of corporate mergers and acquisitions revealed an abundance of classifications or typologies of mergers. For example, Lubatkin (1983), Lundberg (1984), Levy (1986), and Buono and Bowditch (1989) preferred a classification based on level of "fit" and, to some extent, the strategic purpose of mergers, a typology which was described as being horizontal, vertical, product and market concentric, or conglomerate oriented. Pritchett (1985) applied the degree of cooperation to develop his merger classification of rescue, collaborative, contested, and raid situations, while Schweiger and Ivancevich (1987) discussed their merger typology in terms of mergers, planned divestitures, friendly acquisitions, and hostile takeovers. McCann and Gilkey (1988) stressed the importance of good fit among "the three pillars: financial fit, business fit, and organizational fit" (p. 116).

Strategic fit between merger partners, while important, is not sufficient condition for success; a focus on the human aspects of mergers and post-combination outcomes are equally important. In the past, merger-related analyses characteristically focused on the negotiations that preceded the actual combining of firms (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). While the underlying strategic purposes of mergers or acquisitions significantly influence how the firms are combined, the integration strategy, and organizational and human

resource policies and procedures (Schweiger & Ivancevich, 1987), the last decade has seen a growth in human resource considerations (Miles & Snow, 1995).

It is readily apparent that the degree of friendliness or hostility in M & A's is a key determinant of how those involved react to the merger. As suggested by Pritchett (1985, pp. 32-35), the amount of resistance increases as one moves along the continuum from a rescue to a raid. Furthermore, mounting evidence that "acquisitions do not reliably yield the desired financial returns (Lubatkin, 1983) has led Jemison and Sitkin (1996) to suggest that the choice perspective of corporate acquisitions, which historically portrays the corporate executive analysing acquisition opportunities as a rational decision maker, "may provide an incomplete view of acquisition processes and outcome" (p. 145). In addition to the argument that "inadequate analysis of strategic fit is a sure route to failed acquisitions" (p.148), Jemison and Sitkin also believed that related business acquisitions such as horizontal mergers still require the integration of a variety of organizational activities as well as a consideration of organizational fit. With these considerations in mind, three typologies of mergers will be reviewed: strategic fit, cooperative-adversarial, and organizational fit.

Strategic Fit Model

Buono and Bowditch's (1989, pp. 62-64) typology of mergers or acquisitions described a strategic fit model as being either horizontal, vertical, product extension, market extension, or unrelated. Horizontal mergers occur when the firms involved produce the same or closely related products or services in the same geographical market (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Part of the rationale underlying a horizontal merger is the achievement of economies of scale and operating efficiencies. Such mergers find upper and middle management, supervisors, and lower- level personnel in overlapping roles, often resulting in personnel turnovers. Other factors effecting horizontal mergers include the degree of friendliness or hostility between firms, whether it is an organizational rescue

entailing a collaborative approach in which negotiations emphasize creating a fair deal for both firms, contested combinations, or a raid situation (Buono & Bowditch, 1989, p. 64). Frequently compared to "love and marriage" unions, horizontal mergers require an integration strategy which is orientated toward a blending of the two operations, a process which is time-consuming but effective (Buono & Bowditch, 1989, p. 80). Even if the merger is horizontal and collaborative in nature, merger traumas and individual stress resulting from sudden changes in the psychological contract can impact employee satisfaction and commitment (Buono & Bowditch, 1989, p. 132; Marks & Mirvis, 1992; Shore & Tetrick, 1994). As this is usually the situation, realistic merger previews will serve to maintain fairly constant levels of commitment, satisfaction, trust, and performance than do those in which communication of information is less open.

Human resource implications, particularly in organizational rescues and/or the collaborative approach (which are likely to be the case in school division amalgamations) will still be present, as evidenced by resistance on the parts of both firms or divisions to the culture, operating systems, and managerial orientations of the new partner. This dynamic is referred to by Pritchett (1985, p.27) as "collaborative backlash" and influences how employees initially respond to a merger/acquisition. However, the ways in which the integration decisions are made, communicated to staff, and implemented have the major impact on how members of the respective organizations will respond in the long term (Marks & Mirvis, 1992).

Vertical M & A's typically occur when two companies that have had a potential buyer-seller relationship combine. In this case, a company may acquire a supplier (backward integration) or a distributer (forward integration). Product extension, frequently referred to as concentric diversification, takes place between companies which are functionally related in production and/or distribution but sell products that do not compete directly with one another. In market extensions, the acquiring and acquired companies manufacture the same products but sell the products in different geographical

markets. Finally, unrelated mergers, a conglomerate diversification strategy, occur when two unconnected companies combine in order to gain entry into an attractive business or industry and to spread out the companies risks (Buono & Bowditch, 1989, pp. 62-64).

In summary, within the strategic fit model, the type of merger or acquisition and the type of synergies desired has a direct effect on the human resources component. For example, horizontal mergers are frequently undertaken in order to achieve significant economies of scale and operating efficiencies (Buono & Bowditch, 1989) and are accompanied by reductions in force and integration of similar departments and functions (Hopkins, 1983). Similarly, top management turnover is higher in related M & A's than in unrelated, conglomerate types (Walsh, 1988). In contrast, the retention of key management personnel tends to be more important in unrelated acquisitions (Pitts, 1976).

Cooperative - Adversarial Model

The atmosphere surrounding mergers exerts a significant influence on merger success (Pappanastus, Hillman, & Cole, 1987). Pritchett (1985) identified four broad categories of M & A's based on a cooperative-adversarial continuum: organizational rescue, collaboration, contested combination, and raid situations. Organizational rescues are characterized by one firm coming to the aid of another. The ensuing rescue can be either a financial salvage operation or a friendly alternative to a hostile, unwanted takeover (pp. 20-23). Collaboration occurs when negotiations are approached with a sense of good will and diplomacy. Although pre-merger bargaining is focused on creating a fair deal for both firms, there can be significant "resistance on the part of members of both firms to the cultures, operating systems, and managerial orientations of the partner companies" (Buono & Bowditch, 1989, p. 68). Contested combinations, characterized by only one party having an interest in consummating the deal or the two firms desiring quite different arrangements, result in what Pritchett (1985, pp. 27-28) refers to as a company

characterized as a "reluctant bride," one that is unable to successfully defend itself against the merger (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). The end result is loss of pre-merger production and organizational momentum and post-merger adversity between the firms and their members (Pappanastus, Hillman, & Cole, 1987; Pritchett, 1985). Found at the adversarial end of the continuum, the raid, a hostile takeover of one company by another, produces the greatest amount of uncertainty and resistance (Pritchett, 1985, pp. 29-31) and, as such, poses some of the most difficult human resource issues (Perry, 1986). The end result is that "the companies' best and brightest often leave in search of friendlier opportunities with greater potential for growth and advancement" (Buono & Bowditch, 1989, p. 70).

The Organizational Fit / Cultural Model

Napier's (1989) literature review on mergers research determined that there is usually little mention of the human aspects of planning a merger or acquisition. This is an unfortunate omission because organizations as we know them *are* the people in them (Schneider, Brief, & Guzzo, 1996) and the " 'people problems' associated with the trauma of mergers and acquisitions can undermine a successful transition" (Davy, Kinicki, Kilroy, & Scheck, 1988, p. 57). Marks (1982) estimated that employee problems accounted for one-third to one-half of all failed mergers. It is readily apparent that although there is now a considerable body of literature addressing the human resource issue, generally, human resource considerations throughout the 70s and 80s continued to play a relatively small role in M & A planning and decisions (Boland, 1970; Buono & Bowditch, 1989; Hirsch, 1987; Marks, 1982; Marks & Mirvis, 1986; Napier, 1989; Schweiger & Ivancevich, 1987). However, in recent years, literature in organizational behavior has seen an increasing interest in and a growing amount of research on the impact of M & A's on human resource issues. Research has focused on management issues such as culture (Buono & Bowditch, 1989; Clemente & , 1999; McCann & Gilkey, 1988), structure

(Mirvis, 1985), human resource policies (Profusek & Leavitt, 1984), and employee reactions (Astrachan, 1990; Bridges, 1991, 1992; Ivancevich et al., 1987; Secord, 1996).

Although there are multiple definitions and uses of the concept of indigenous organizational culture (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985; Pettigrew, 1979; Shein, 1983), there is still an integrative theme of custom. Organizational culture "holds an organization together through traditional ways of carrying out organizational responsibilities, unique patterns of beliefs and expectations that emerge over time, and the resultant shared understandings of reality at given points in time" (Buono & Bowditch, 1989, p. 137). In other words, organizational culture means that an organization has its own norms, customs, roles, rituals, ceremonies, and symbols. Indeed, according to McManus & Hergert (1988, p. 12), organizations are really "*minicultures* within societies and therefore embody many of the basic characteristics of larger or national cultures." Furthermore, in addition to the organization's culture, there may well be numerous sub-cultures or *microcultures* within the same organization.

Quinn and Kimberley (1984, pp. 296-300) identified four types of organizational cultures: hierarchical, developmental, rational, and group. The basic assumptions inherent in each of these cultural paradigms are stability, change, achievement, and human affiliation (p. 298-299). Directed toward "security, order,...routinization, ... standardization and the perpetuation of the status quo" (p. 297), the hierarchical perspective tends to be present-oriented and decisions are based on documentation and accountability. Orientated toward "creativity, risk, growth, ...adaptability and external legitimacy" (p. 298), the developmental perspective tends to be future-oriented and decisions, although made quickly, are adapted as more information is forthcoming. The third perspective, the rational culture world view, is "achievement-oriented and...emphasizes logical direction and the initiation of action" (p. 298). Its orientation is adhocratic or purposive and decisions tend to be conclusive, have a single purpose, and are concerned with efficiency. In contrast, the group perspective leans toward "affiliation

and...emphasizes harmony and consideration of the individual" (p. 298). Meaning is discovered through process; decision-making embodies participation, diversity of opinion, and integrative solutions. Recognizing that no organization is likely to reflect only one culture, it is likely that elements of each culture will be found within an organization although some will be more dominant than others. However, during times of organizational change and transition, cultural differences between merging corporations create conflict and demand attention (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 300; Pritchett, 1987).

Specific and unique to each organization, culture is a powerful determinant of both individual and group behavior; its strength lies in the degree of understandings held common by its members. Therefore, although merging organizations may have strategic fit, there may well be underlying cultural differences, a lack of organizational fit, that threaten successful integration. Cultural integration in organizational combinations may consist of either cultural blending or cultural takeover (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). Uncovering and critically examining the cultural beliefs, values, and assumptions of the respective organizations is a first step in implementing a cultural integration strategy (p. 163) or, as referred to by Bolman & Deal (1997), a reframing of the cultural aspects of an organization. While the actual merger or acquisition tends to take place within a relatively compressed period of time, cultural integration requires a more extended time. Consequently, the new organization frequently finds itself dealing with organizational integration after the fact (Marks & Mirvis, 1992).

An example of taking into account organizational and/or cultural fit is provided by Blake and Mouton (1985). Their Interface Conflict-Solving Model addressed the complex and challenging task of integrating two organizations with different cultures, histories, traditions, policies, and practices. Focusing on the merger's human side and a shared leadership approach, the model took into account each company's motivation and used open communication (Anderson & Kyprianou, 1994; Clemente & Greenspan, 1999; Davy et al., 1988), participative problem-solving, and collaborative reorganization to maximize

merger success (Blake & Mouton, pp. 41-42). The development of a systems approach to designing survivor programs, programs and training initiatives that address the needs of dealing with change, planning and managing careers, and the coaching and mentoring of employees (Blake & Mouton) served "to fill part of the void left by the dissolution of the implied psychological contract between employer and employee—the implied contract that offered continued employment in return for loyalty and hard work" (Clark & Koonce, 1995, p. 25; Shore & Tetrick, 1994).

Maintaining a healthy morale during this period of cultural collision is a key determinant of merger success. To this end, numerous writers have addressed post-merger intervention strategies (Buono & Bowditch, 1989, pp. 195-224; see also Blake & Mouton, 1985; Gabarro, 1987; Galosy, 1990; Clemente & Greenspan, 1999; Mirvus & Marks, 1992; McManus & Hergert, 1988; Olie, 1994) which included the use of newsletters, phone "hot lines," and presentations as communication mechanisms; realistic assessments of merger outcomes; workshops and counseling; surveys and feedbacks; transition teams; intergroup mirroring and team building; parallel organizational structures; employee retention and dismissal; and attention to organizational symbols and rituals. In addition, effort at cultural change requires changes in managerial and supervisory behavior; management training in value-consistent and performance-oriented personal skills must be a priority (Metz, 1986). While there is no single approach or technique which will guarantee success, the human processes underlying M & A's must be supported by as many means as possible. A climate and cultural approach to total organizational change can be instrumental in breaking the spiral of failed transformations. Schneider et al. (1996, p. 13) suggested that this can be accomplished by simultaneously focusing on multiple levels, functions, and persons. However, Schneider et al. cautioned readers that "what people in an organization experience as the climate and believe is the culture ultimately determines whether sustained change is accomplished" (p. 18).

The textbook answer to executives wanting to know how long it takes to change a company and its culture is, " 'Most say five to seven years,' [a] time frame typically...cited in success stories. Less effective processes take even longer" (Jick, 1996, p. 77). The problem, Jick explained, arises with the second question, " 'How much time does our company *have* to change?' The answer is an impatient, 'About one year!' " (p. 77). Clearly, the dilemma is that while change typically seems to take longer than desired, each day that passes is costly in terms of competitive advantage. Jick suggested three approaches that present the biggest possibilities for accelerating change: to accelerate people's understanding of and commitment to change; to accelerate the action and experimentation aspects of change; and to emphasize momentum to both accelerate and maintain speed (p.79). While accelerating change requires challenging our accepted paradigm of the change process, Jick suggested that desire, skill, determination, and a considerable degree of imagination can "provide a glimmer of hope for those companies that sincerely do want to change...as of yesterday" (p. 82).

How: The Process and Management of M & A's

The process and management of corporate mergers and acquisitions has, over the years, been framed in a variety of ways from merger sequences (McManus & Hergert, 1988) to models, flow charts and discussions of change and transition (Bridges, 1991; Kessler, 1999; Quinn & Kimberley, 1984; Levy, 1986; Want, 1995). Other writers have addressed the process and management of M & A's as the strategic management of change (Tichy, 1983), the reframing of organizations (Bolman & Deal, 1995), and the reengineering/redesigning of organizations (Buono, 1997). Representative of a typical merger sequence is McManus and Hergert's (1988) description of the stages: conception, intelligence/espionage, public courtship, consummation, and honeymoon (pp.148-151). Within their analogy of mergers to the development of a relationship, McManus and Hergert compared the immediate post-merger period to that of a brief honeymoon, a time

during which the two partners become more intimately acquainted. The honeymoon, however, is often short-lived and "passion can give way to paranoia [and] the climate can turn stormy" (pp. 11). A "survivor mentality" (p. 172) develops and corporate "cultural chaos" (p. 29) may ensue as employees begin to question their role in the new organization. This viewpoint is consistent with the opinions stated by Buono and Bowditch (1989), Ireland and Hitt (1998), and Pritchett (1985) that upheaval in the lives of individuals inevitably disrupts the organizations involved and is typically manifested in declines in employee performance and a postcombination "slump." In addition, Astrachan's (1990) studies corroborated his hypothesis, namely, that mergers and acquisitions raise "separation anxiety which, in turn, influences individual feelings and behavior" (p. 99). These feelings affect patterns of group behavior which, in turn, affect individual reactions. Viewing this reciprocal influence as responsible for the formation of patterns of self-perpetuating behavior, patterns "intimately connected with the task-related performance by the group" (p. 99), Astrachan recommended the use of anxiety management programs during times of corporate mergers. The components of his anxiety management program included: a monitoring function to identify and respond to anxiety, emotions, and behavior; a component to deal with the emotions raised through means such as individual and team counseling; and a consideration of "the planning and development of relationship changes including new attachments and separations" (p. 126). Sensitivity to and management of separation anxiety is, in his opinion, crucial to successful large-scale change. Kessler (1999), discussed worry-free mergers from a banking perspective and suggested that anxiety management include a transitions advertising campaign. Customers being one of an organization's most important assets, when the announcement of a merger is made, customer retention processes should already be underway. These process can serve to ease fears, keep the organization in touch with clients, and get the word out to its new community.

A final example of a merger and acquisition process is provided by McCann and Gilkey (1988). A composite of several general models, their process included the following stages: (a) strategic planning, (b) organizing, (c) searching, (d) analysis and offer, (e) negotiation and closure, (f) transition, and (g) integration (pp. 73-91). As indicated by the authors, the various stages are not discreet but overlap and have feedback loops. Arguing that the odds of success are vastly improved when an explicit model of the M & A process is used, McCann and Gilkey (p. 99) stated, "Sufficient time and resources must be devoted to actively managing this process to assure its effectiveness. Effective process management counts!"

To a certain extent, crisis management is not only a natural but an essential component of process management. Stress, a natural reaction, was described by one executive, "Merger stress is a 10" (Marks & Mirvis, 1986, p. 38). Symptoms of merger syndrome immediately after the sale is announced may include preoccupation, imagining the worst, stress reactions, tension, chaos, a combat mentality, constricted communications, and illusions of control. Furthermore, as companies merge, "survivor sickness" is characterized by culture clash, we vs. they, superior vs. inferior, attack and defend; and win vs. lose situations (p. 38). Therefore, attention to the human sides of mergers must extend well into the post-merger period in order to "counter 'survivor sickness' and regain people's energy and commitment in the post-merger phase" (Marks & Mirvis, 1992, p. 19).

Towers Perrin (1999) suggested that, despite the adverse effect on company morale, firms often integrate posthaste because of the cost benefits involved. Although speed is often considered to be the best route to integration, Birkinshaw (1999) advised that where knowledge assets are critical, "a slower focus on 'human integration' is apt to be superior" (p. 1). In his opinion, integration is a two-fold process: task integration—value adding activities which create synergy and increase a firm's capabilities and resources and human integration—activities which generate satisfaction and ultimately a

shared identity among employees. Birkinshaw recommended the creation of a visible integration leader or team to manage the process and to communicate integration activities throughout the new organizations. Emphasizing work-related interactions between the two firms and rotating personnel would promote task integration and, at the same time , ameliorate the us-versus-them syndrome (p. 3). Integration takes time and Birkinshaw reminded readers to be sensitive to change overload and to go with the flow.

Another perspective on synergy is offered by Sirower (1998, p. 11). From his viewpoint, the four cornerstones of real synergy in a combined organization rest on a strategic vision, an operating strategy, seamless systems integration, and the management of power and culture to get all personnel on the same page. All four must be knitted together in a unified plan. "If just one cornerstone is missing or the critical props are in conflict, the combined company faces a lame shakedown period" (p. 11).

Organizational culture is comprised of the beliefs, expectations and behaviors that organizations appreciate, reward, and reinforce (Davenport, 1998, p. 1). Believing that cultural integration is the biggest impediment to merger success, Davenport described three factors than can increase chances for successful integration: integrity, involvement, and information. Davenport described organizational culture as the DNA of an organization, "invisible to the naked eye but critical in shaping the character of the workplace" (p. 1). In his opinion, nothing means more for employees than the implicit psychological contract they have with an organization, a contract which conveys what each will give and receive in turn. In order for this contract to bind people to an organization, the psychological contract needs to be understood by both employer and employees; believed to be fair and accepted by all parties; and responsive to employee needs, providing them with the development opportunities needed to keep their skills and knowledge fresh and relevant (Clemente & Greenspan, 1999). Finally, the contract needs to be strategically aligned with the requirements for business success (pp. 3-4). The psychological contract is a vital manifestation of the organizational culture. For this

reason, early in the change process, management should consider how the culture of previously separate organizations must evolve in order to form a more perfect union. Human resource involvement early in the merger process can mean the difference between success and failure (Clemente & Greenspan, 1999; Leonard, 1999). Merger workload and the amount of detail involved can be overwhelming. Because communication is the biggest problem when dealing with the uncertainties that employees have about change, Leonard recommended a proactive communication strategy which would provide employees with accurate and up-to-date information. In addition, "post-merger communications must inform and motivate the merged company's employee base. Communications must achieve employee buy-in to the deal and build commitment to the merged firm's strategic vision" (Clemente & Greenspan, 1999, p. 5).

To integrate successfully, Marks and Mirvis (1992) cautioned that team leaders have to work with many different mindsets. Team members fall into the categories of "the ready, the wanting, and the wrung out"—those who willingly let go of old ways and adapt to new demands, ready to begin the work at hand; those who want more support and reasons to be part of a team; and those who feel shut out and resist efforts to move on (p. 23). Factors which can trouble newly formed teams include a new boss, new peers, new ways of doing things, and new power bases. Managers responsible for guiding post-merger team development have to deal with employee needs of psychological enlistment (Spreitzer, Janasz, & Quinn, 1999), role development, and the development of trust and confidence in their colleagues and supervisors (Zenger, Musselwhite, Hurson, & Perrin, 1994, p. 26). Marks and Mirvis suggested the following steps: psychological enlistment— re-recruit employees, massage egos, and eventually, if necessary, lay it on the line with a "shape-up or ship-out" message; role development and team organization— negotiate rules, establish supporting relationships, and set ground rules; and trust and confidence building— model new behaviors, manage performance, and lead with vision and values (pp. 26-30). The bottom line for managers is, in their opinion, to "pay now" by investing

in systematic post-merger team building or "pay later" through the loss of key talent and disappointing results (p. 31). True participation, whether occurring through the development of empowered teams or other configurations, is beneficial to both employees and organizations when it results in positive attitudes and increased commitment that, in turn, "increase individual and organizational capacities to learn, adapt, and develop toward high levels of excellence" (Hinkley, 1985, p. 66).

Even when managers recognize the importance of analysing strategic and organizational fit "they often are prevented from doing this by...impediments inherent in the very process of analysing, negotiating with, and acquiring another firm" (Jemison & Sitkin, 1996, p. 148). Jemison and Sitkin identified the impediments as: *activity segmentation*— the technical complexity of activities surrounding an acquisition and the traditional roles of participants may lead to task segmentation and a disproportionate amount of time spent on analysis of strategic fit rather than organizational fit; *escalating momentum*— forces that stimulate momentum in the acquisition process are stronger than forces that retard its momentum. Escalating momentum results in premature solutions, less consideration of integration issues, and lower chances for a successful outcome; *expectational ambiguity*— ambiguity provides maneuvering room in the negotiation phase, opportunity to save face in public announcements, and helps parties to find common denominators on seemingly intractable positions. However, when carried into the integration phase, the same ambiguity can be dysfunctional and reduce chances for successful integration; and *management system misapplication*—defensiveness on the part of both firms and parent firm arrogance can lead to a misapplication of management systems which, in turn, reduces the probability of a successful merger (pp. 148-161). In short, the acquisition process may be the problem; this is not always recognizable "because different groups are involved at different stages of the process and because all groups are not affected by the [same] impediments" (p. 162).

In summary, major organizational change affects an individual's ability to feel effective, valued, and in control; disrupts existing roles and working relationships; creates conflict between winners and losers; and causes a loss of meaning for those on the receiving end. As pointed out by Bolman and Deal (1997, p. 339), "Effective change requires a well-orchestrated, integrated design that responds to needs for learning, realignment, negotiation, and grieving." It is, however, worth noting that "even in relatively friendly situations...there is still likely to be passive resistance to organizational changes, new policies and procedures, and what the acquiring organization or merger partner is attempting to accomplish" (Buono & Bowditch, 1989, p. 71). In addition, leaders need to acknowledge the influence and constraints of culture on organizations. An analyses of the beliefs, values, and assumptions on which the respective cultures are based will serve to remove barriers and problems for the merged entity. While management literature suggests that most people will support organizational change if they can understand the need for it and participate in the change, there are limits to which people are ready and able to assimilate (Buono & Bowditch, p. 163).

Ethical Dimensions

Mergers and acquisitions are not without ethical dimensions. Buono and Bowditch (1989) attributed much of the tension underlying the human side of M & A's to five key concerns, each with a strong ethical component. Competing claims arise from the reality that mergers and acquisitions involve multiple parties, each with their own interests and needs. A second concern is secrecy versus deception, the managed release of information in an open, honest, and timely manner as opposed to the controlled release of information to distort the truth and manipulate people. A third ethical component is directed toward the distinction between coercion and participation, forcing people into certain situations as opposed to providing them with a true opportunity to take part in discussions and

decisions; the fourth is how the processes of grief, loss, and termination are handled. The final concern focuses on the level of respect accorded to organizational members and other key constituents as individuals (pp. 249-250).

Although the increasing awareness of ethical issues in business and the use of codes of practice are becoming more prominent in organizations, the parameters of ethical decision-making in organizations are severely constrained by both internal and external forces; for example, laws, culture norms, labor relations, lack of ethical awareness, inflexible authority structures and attitudes, the need to maintain profitability, and expected efficiencies of operation (Donaldson & Sheldrake, 1990, p. 69, 73). In support of the movement toward increased ethical considerations, Donaldson and Sheldrake advocated "matching values to strategies,...[developing] commitment from the mutual design of codes,...more openness in decision-making,...encouragement and incorporation of research on values, the review of ethical codes as circumstances change, [and a] recognition that ethics often requires a balancing of principles that pull in different and often opposite directions" (pp. 75-76).

Using another approach, Bolman and Deal (1997, pp. 340-353) discussed the issue of ethics and spirit through metaphors in a reframing perspective. According to the authors, the factory metaphor of excellence through efficiency requires the added element of "commitment and autonomy at all levels of the organization" (p. 345). Crucial for creating and maintaining excellence is the gift of authorship:

> In an orchestra, musicians each develop individual parts within the parameters of a particular musical score and the interpretative challenges posed by the conductor. Authorship turns the pyramid on its side...The leader's responsibility is to create conditions that promote authorship. Individuals need to see their work as meaningful and worthwhile, to feel personally accountable for the consequences of their efforts, and to get feedback that lets them know the results. (Bolman and Deal, 1995, p. 106)

The extended family metaphor of "caring— one person's compassion and concern for another, is both the purpose and the ethical glue that hold a family together...The gift

of servant-leaders is love" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 345). Whitmyer (1993, p. 347) described caring as beginning with knowing: listening, understanding, accepting and progressing to appreciation, respect, and love, "a willingness to reach out and open one's heart."

Bolman and Deal's (1997) jungle metaphor of justice with the added dimension of power can provide people with a sense of efficacy and an ability to influence their world. This concept is closely tied to authorship, giving those within an organization as much power, a voice in decisions affecting them, as possible "while still enabling the company to prosper over the long term" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 350).

The last metaphor of a temple combines the elements of faith and significance. Although members of a community or organization may be diverse in many ways, shared faith, modeled by the attributes of excellence, caring, and justice, is augmented by the significance of their work, both as added value to the world and as how the work is understood. This significance is built through the use of "expressive and symbolic forms: rituals, ceremonies, icons, music, and stories" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 351).

The preceding suggestions offer possibilities for future ethical considerations. Effective organizations "create, maintain, and sometimes change climates and cultures to emphasize the achievement of multiple priorities" (Schneider, Gunnarson, & Niles-Jolly, 1994, p. 27). A change process such as that experienced in a merger provides management with the opportunity to illustrate for employees the organization's goals and priorities which, in turn, enables employees to "make meaning" of their new world.

Organizational Leadership

Although the concept of leadership is not the primary focus of either the research study or the literature review, organizational leadership *is* an important dimension of change (Fullan, 1991, 1997). In the case of change brought about by school division amalgamations, leadership, both formal and informal, plays a vital role in successful

mergers. Numerous studies have been conducted on "good leadership" in organizations (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Helgesen, 1995, 1996; Kotter, 1988; Levinson & Rosenthal, 1984) as well as the writing of books and articles on both current and future leadership (Albrecht, 1994; Bardwick, 1996; Bennis, 1999; Bridges, 1996; Bolman & Deal, 1995, 1997; Covey, 1992; Fullan, 1996, 1998; Gabarro, 1987; Gardner, 1990; Greenleaf, 1973; Handy, 1996; Hunt, 1991; Ireland & Hitt, 1998; Kanter, 1983, 1996; Senge, 1996; Steere, 1996; Taylor, 1999; Weber, 1996). *The Leader of the Future* by Heselbein, Goldsmith, and Beckhard (1996), a compendium of new thought on leadership within organizations of today and in the future, provided insight into the changing role of leadership and changes in organizational structure. Key ideas of selected writers from this seminal work are included in the following discussion.

Handy (1996, pp. 3-9) believed leadership requires strength of character. He examined the "new" language of organizational structures, words such as adhocracy or leadership with a purpose, subsidiarity, earned authority, virtuality, and distributive leadership. Handy's description of emerging organizational structures resembled an inside-out doughnut with three concentric circles representing a core group with distributed leadership in the center, contracting and outsourcing of work in the middle, and a flexible, on-call labor force around its periphery.

Bridges (1996, pp.11-18) spoke of dejobbed leadership occurring through an "unbundling" (p. 15) and diffusion of leadership throughout the organization as well as the development of an emphasis on knowledge-based work. Senge (1996, pp. 41-57) advocated systemic change through learning organizations and community building, not through hierarchies while Kanter (1996, pp. 89-98) proposed a need for cosmopolitan, mentally agile leaders who perceive organizations as open cultures to both customers and employees. Bardwick (1996, pp. 131-139) underscored the need for passionate leaders for war-time situations, leaders who set priorities, develop winning strategies, communicate personally, display integrity, and have the courage to act in the face of adversity.

Steere (1996, pp. 265-272) proposed the need for leadership to be developed through the championship of an organization's cultural framework; whereas Weber (1996, pp. 303-309) prescribed leadership through the development and the building of a compassionate organization characterized by integrity, honesty, high energy, resilience, and accepting and welcoming diversity. Hesselbein (1996, pp.122-124) reminded his readers of the need to focus on "monitoring the quality of leadership, the work force, and relationships," while Hodgkinson (1991) spoke of leadership as a moral duty .

In sum, key attributes of leadership can be summarized as principle centered and displaying strength of character, integrity, honesty, loyalty, mental agility/quality of mind, courage, diplomacy, being supportive and sustaining, respectful, visionary, inspired, all with an eye for change, a steadying hand, and a willingness to empower those within the organization. These leadership characteristics are conducive to the development of collaborative organizational cultures which embody the principles of collegiality, a community of leaders, and shared vision (Sackney & Dibski, 1994) and are important considerations for professional leadership.

More recently, the Hesselbein and Cohen (1998) compiled essay and interview articles about leadership in the book *Leader to Leader*. Fundamentally, their message was, as described by Vasilash (1999, p. 2):

> To be a leader (don't think about your job title), know who you are and what you aim to accomplish. If you don't know who you are, it is unlikely that any of the people with whom you work are likely to want to follow you. If you don't know where you're going, first of all you aren't likely to have followers (at least not for long), and secondly, you won't know whether you've attained success because it won't be on your map.

Ireland and Hitt (1998) discussed the role of strategic leadership for the 21st century. Defining strategic leadership as "a person's ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organization" (p. 2), the authors maintained that the effects

of the global economy and its new competitive landscape demand a change in our view of strategic leadership centered on a single person or a few people at the top of a hierarchical pyramid to the "great groups view" (pp. 4-5). In Ireland and Hitt's opinion, given the changing nature of organizations, the "old view" is increasingly counterproductive. Based on Handy's (1989) thoughts about organizational communities, the great groups view of strategic leadership proposed that public corporations, in our case public institutions, will be regarded not as a piece of property owned by individuals, but as a community. Employees are thought of as citizens of a community. "A community is something to which a person belongs and that belongs to no one individual; the community's citizens have both responsibilities to pursue the common good and rights to receive benefits earned through its attainment" (p. 4). "Great groups" are combinations or collaborations of organizational citizens functioning successfully. Moreover, within the great groups, strategic leadership takes place among a range of people with different talents. Great groups have several characteristics: members of great groups have accepted their responsibilities for firm outcomes; great groups seek to learn from multiple parties; increasingly, the information great groups gather to form knowledge and how to use knowledge already possessed must come from events and conditions outside the organization; great groups maintain records of individuals' knowledge stocks in order to quickly find others who possess the knowledge required to solve problems as they arise; and finally, great groups understand that the organization's method of strategic leadership results in a constantly changing configuration of responsibilities (pp. 4-6). As Ireland and Hitt go on to explain, "perhaps the most important 'great group' in an organization is the top management team (TMT),...a relatively small group of...individuals [who] are at the apex of the organization and provide strategic leadership" (p. 6). In addition, the components of strategic leadership, "executed through interactions based on a sharing of insights, knowledge, and responsibilities for achieved outcomes" (p. 7), include determining the organization's purpose or vision, exploiting and managing core

competencies, developing human capital, sustaining an effective organizational culture (Hargreaves, 1997), emphasizing ethical practices (Hooper & Potter, 1999; Laabs, 1999; Nash, 1999), and establishing balanced organizational controls (Ireland & Hitt, pp.7-14). Given the above components, Ireland and Hitt concluded with several recommendations for strategic leadership practices: focus on a growth orientation, generate and manage intellectual capital, mobilize human capital, develop an effective organizational culture, and remain focused on the future (pp. 14-16).

Concurring with Ireland and Hitt's (1998) thoughts, Bennis (1999) stated:

> This encompassing tendency [of TOPdown leadership] is dysfunctional in today's world of blurring, spastic, hyperturbulent change, and will get us into unspeakable troubles unless we understand that the search engine, the main stem winder for effective change is the workforce and their creative alliance with top leadership. (p. 3)

Bennis suggested four competencies that will determine the success of "New Leadership." The new leader understands and practices the power of appreciation. She/he are connoisseurs of talent, more curators than creators. The new leader also keeps reminding people of what's important. The new leader generates and sustains trust. Finally, the new leader and the led are intimate allies (pp. 7-9). Rather than pyramids, Bennis envisions postbureaucratic organizations as "structures built of energy and ideas, led by people who find joy in the task at hand, while embracing each other and not worrying about leaving monuments behind" (p. 10).

Distinctions are often made between the terms *leadership* and *management*. Bennis and Nanus (1985, p. 21) offered the distinction that "managers do things right and leaders do the right thing," while Kotter (1988) viewed management as planning, organizing, and controlling and leadership as a change-oriented process of visioning, networking, and building relationships. Perhaps, as argued by Gardner (1990), leadership and management should not be contrasted too sharply for leadership is key to the

management of planned second-order change. Marino's (1999) list described the innate differences between leaders and managers and included such succinct observations as: managers cuss, leaders discuss; managers require, leaders inspire; managers preach, leaders teach; managers dread failure, leaders learn from it; and managers do things that translate into action, leaders do things that expand opportunities (pp. 2-3).

Herman (1999), a strategic business futurist and author, predicted a dramatic shift in emphasis on the role of leadership from a management perspective to a facilitation perspective. From his viewpoint, given the existence of the large cadre of managers in today's world, "the transformation to leadership must, of necessity, be born out of conflict," conflict arising "between employees who are desperately crying out for leadership and managers who are equally desperate to maintain control" (p. 2). Addressing this problem, Herman stated, will result in a "company upside-down" model in which support and empowerment flow up from the management level thus providing support to the whole organizational structure.

As a final note, Bolman and Deal (1997, pp.302-303) suggested that reframing "offers a way to get beyond narrow and oversimplified views of leadership...Depending on leader and circumstance, each [frame] can lead to compelling and constructive leadership, but none is right for all times and all seasons." Within Bolman and Deal's structural frame, a leader is characterized as analyst and architect, employing a leadership process of analysis and design. Within the human resource frame, a leader is portrayed as catalyst and servant, initiating a leadership process of support and empowerment. Within the political frame leaders are viewed as advocate and negotiator working toward advocracy and coalition building; and, within the symbolic frame Bolman and Deal defined leaders as both prophet and poet providing inspiration and symbolically framing and reframing experiences within the organization (pp. 303-316). Ideally, managers combine multiple frames into a comprehensive approach to leadership. Still, it is unrealistic to expect everyone to be a leader for all times and seasons. Wise leaders understand their own

strengths, work to expand them, and build teams that can provide leadership in all four modes—structural, political, human resource, and symbolic (p. 317) .

Organizational Transition and Educational Governance Reform

Forces for change are apparent in the "escalating development of global markets, increasingly rapid changes in work technologies, shifting workforce and customer demographics, and increased emphasis on quality and flexibility in products and services" (Randolph, 1995, p. 19). It is within this context of rapid change that organizations are moving from the traditional management model to an empowering management which calls for massive and difficult change throughout an organization (Herman, 1999; Ireland & Hitt, 1998). While "restructuring" has become an umbrella term applied to the various forms of corporate reorganizations that have occurred over the last twenty years as a "means for firms to abandon traditional lines of business and to enter new and more promising industries" (McManus & Hergert, 1988, p. 229), the educational context of restructuring is focused on extensive and fundamental changes. As described by Conley (1993), change activities can be placed in three different levels: *renewal activities* assist organizations to improve existing procedures, *reform activities* enable organizations to adapt to changed circumstances by altering existing procedures, and *restructuring activities* create new procedures in order to reconstruct the organization to meet future demands. Renewal and reform activities are first-order changes. Restructuring is a second-order change and, as such, requires a change in the way we think about educational changes; true restructuring can only occur through a major educational paradigm shift.

Why: Driving Forces for Educational Change

Levin (1976) defined three broad ways in which pressures for educational policy change may arise: through natural disasters; through external forces such as imported technology, values, and immigration; and through internal contradictions such as when

indigenous changes in technology lead to new social patterns and needs or when groups in society perceive discrepancies between educational values and outcomes affecting themselves or others in whom they have an interest. Parallelling Lundberg's (1984) discussion on the driving forces for change, Fullan (1991) expounded on change from an educational perspective, describing change as multidimensional, occurring both individually and within groups. Furthermore, because educational change involves people's basic conceptions of education as well as the need and difficulty of developing a sense of meaning about change, there is an inherent, sophisticated, and somewhat undefined dynamic interrelation of the dimensions of change (pp. 40-41). Given that there will always be pressures for change in pluralistic societies, Fullan (pp. 17-19) recommended that the "how" and "what" decisions need to "keep in mind two critical questions: who benefits from the change (the values question) and how...feasible are the idea and approach (the capacity for implementation question)."

Educational innovation or change is generated through both political and educational motives. Large educational reform is very much a political process (Sarason, 1990) and is accompanied by a "greater commitment of leaders, the power of new ideas, and additional resources; but it also produces overload, unrealistic time-lines, uncoordinated demands, simplistic solutions, misdirected efforts, inconsistencies, and underestimation of what it takes to bring about [change]" (Fullan, 1991, p. 27). Sarason categorized first-order changes as those that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of what is currently done "without disturbing the basic organizational features, without substantially altering the ways that children and adults perform their roles" (p. 342). Second-order change seeks to alter the fundamental structures of educational organizations, including new goals, structures, and roles (Fullan, 1991, p. 29). According to Cuban (1988), second-order changes in the field of educational have largely failed (p. 343). The cause for this failure is not the quality or value of innovative ideas; rather, the

cause for failure is frequently located in "the muddle in the middle" (McDermott, 1992), a wandering through the wilderness of paradigmatic change.

In particular, the influence of social and technological change on educational governance restructuring is evidenced by factors such as the need to make the best possible use of resources, increased global competitiveness, increasing poverty and emotional distress, and changing demographics (SSTA,1993). In an effort to address these challenges, educational institutes are reevaluating educational governance and the current move to amalgamate school divisions is yet another example of organizational change. Inherent in this change are elements of both first and second-order planned change. The actual merger/amalgamation of two or more divisions is a first-order, rational, structural change which has both economic and demographic implications. There is also, as articulated by Bridges (1986), a transition which is both multidimensional and multi-level. This transitional second-order change encompasses a dynamic people process and involves a change in context within a new paradigm and a new state of thinking and acting. It is a change which needs to occur at the personal level of individuals who are committed to the improvement of educational organizations.

Educational governance restructuring involves a purposeful and explicit decision to engage in a process of change involving external or internal professional guidance. When considering school division amalgamations as a second-order planned change, one sees *permitting conditions* such as the availability of additional resources for managing the change through provincial funding, the provision of personnel to assist the change effort, and a readiness and willingness of school divisions to endure the anticipated uncertainty, as well as the emergence of leadership capable of providing new vision and mobilizing the necessary energy and commitment to its realization. *Enabling conditions* include a perceived threat to the survival of a school division and a degree of tolerance to change. *Precipitating conditions* include the tendency of divisions to experience declines in school enrollments; the emergence of new unmet needs such as the increased integration of

services to children in the areas of education, health, and social services; the pressure of stakeholder groups which have a vested interest in education; and a real or perceived crisis, namely, the need to amalgamate before being mandated to do so through legislative action. *Triggering events* include a sharp decline in educational funding grants, new technologies, anticipated political interference, and the movement to consolidate school divisions in a metasystem of schools divisions throughout the nation.

School Division Amalgamations as Mergers and Acquisitions

Whether or not the consolidation of school divisions results in down-sizing, it is evident the educational governance restructuring is a concerted effort at "rightsizing" (Hitt et al., 1994). Numerous divisions find themselves no longer able to provide their clients or their organization members with a full range of services. Due partly to declining enrolments, reduced funding and rising costs, there is a perceived need for larger divisions which would result in the organization's ability to better provide needed services (Langlois & Scharf, 1991). The merging or amalgamation of school divisions are obvious examples of strategic fit, particularly as school divisions are governed by the same legislation and share the same vision of educating children. However, a question that bears consideration arises, "Is there an organizational fit?" School division amalgamation is somewhat typical of a horizontal merger which occurs when firms produce the same or closely related products/services in the same geographical market (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). While the issues of realized economies of scale and increased efficiencies resulting from amalgamations or mergers are still on the table (Monk & Haller, 1986; Natchtigal, 1982; Sirower, 1998), there is no argument that integration strategies oriented to a blending of operations, particularly on the human side of mergers, is crucial to the success of the new organizational structure.

Attending to the culture of the new organization is important at all stages of a merger and requires a variety of approaches. A flattening of the organizational structure,

movement toward the decentralization of authority, and the emphasis on "teams" require that educational leaders, particularly school administrators, become key actors in facilitating change (Herman, 1999; Jones & Maloy, 1988; Sergiovanni, 1987). Administrators need not only to be cognizant of issues but also need to understand team/group theory and be capable of and willing to expend the considerable time and energy entailed in effective post-merger team building. Supporting this point, Fullan (1991) stated that the administrator is the single most important individual for setting the expectations and tone of the pattern of change within the school organization. Whether the team is one of school administrators, a school staff, or cross-sectional teams with a specific purposes, an effective team needs direction and training for new skills, encouragement and support for change, and the opportunity to move through the stages of effective team-building: psychological enlistment, role development, and the development of trust and confidence in colleagues and supervisors (Marks & Mirvis, 1992).

Summary

Corporate mergers, 90s style, have occurred for two reasons, "to further strategic purposes and to achieve a global presence" (Marks & Mirvis, 1992, p. 18). Obviously, the scope of school division mergers or amalgamations are not on the same scale. However, many of the same issues arise. School divisions need to consider what is the optimum size for their organization and whether a merger or acquisition would enhance the ability to provide the best possible product or service to students. Selection of an amalgamation partner should be accompanied by considerations of cultural congruency and the reaction of present and new employees over the possibility of organizational restructuring and redundancies. The selection of key players who are able to effectively and efficiently move school divisions through the amalgamation process are key to its success.

If the strategic purpose of mergers or consolidations within the framework of educational governance is to provide children with the best possible education, there must

be a mutual synergy between the merging organizations so that a transfer of technology and know-how is realized. This means attending to knitting operations together and keeping talented people loyal, motivated, and within the educational system. Meaningful change is time-consuming and requires the participation of people both within and without the educational organization. To realize the potential benefits of participation is a challenge for administrators, teachers, school families, and communities. Furthermore, the critical factors which apply to any restructuring must be taken into account if potential benefits are to be realized and common pitfalls avoided.

Change and rate of change are more dynamic today than ever before. Every day the media carry reports of yet another corporate merger and/or restructuring. Every day thousands of lives are altered by these mergers and, only too often, people are ill-equipped to deal with the accompanying changes. Addressing the emotional impact of change and what is going on inside those who have to make the change work are the necessary ingredients of a recipe for merger success. Indeed, the mix of ingredients is just as important as the ingredients themselves; the binding agent, that which holds it all together so it isn't a "flop," is a desire by those within the organization to make it work. The "icing on the cake" is meaningful work and personal development.

Fullan and Miles (1992), among others, used the phrase "change is a journey, not a blueprint" (p. 749). If handled with care and aforethought, the journey can be one of enlightenment and discovery. Change is a journey travelled by people.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptualization of this study was influenced by the writer's view that a congruency can be drawn between business mergers and acquisitions and school division amalgamations. Allison (1969, p. 207) maintained that "what each analyst sees and judges to be important is a function not only of the evidence about what happened, but also of the "Conceptual Lenses" through which [she] he looks at the evidence." The explanations

produced reflect an analyst's assumptions about the nature of the puzzle, the categories in which problems should be considered, the types of evidence that are relevant, and the determinants of occurrences. These clusters of related assumptions form basic frames of reference or conceptual models which guide analysts in determining their activities of explanation and prediction. As Allison (1969) so aptly stated,

> Conceptual models both fix the mesh of nets that the analyst drags through the material in order to explain a particular action or decision and direct [her] him to cast [her] his net in select ponds, at certain depths, in order to catch the fish [she] he is after. (p. 208)

With this in mind, the *conceptual framework* underlying this study was based upon a synthesis of the literature on organizational change and M & A's. It was within this particular net that the researcher envisioned both a school division amalgamation process and the management of that process as a planned and managed second-order change. Influenced by both changing and stable contextual parameters within our environment, we find problem, policy and political streams (Kingdon, cited in Sabatier, 1991). The problem stream contains information about real world problems and the effects of past government interventions; the policy stream is represented by a community composed of researchers, advocates, and other specialists who analyse problems and formulate possible alternatives; and the political stream consists of elections, both local and at the legislative level. At various points in time, the three streams intersect to open windows of opportunity for change, in this instance, change through educational governance reform. Within these windows one can identify the driving forces for educational change (Levy, 1986). Consisting of permitting, enabling, precipitating, and triggering forces, the driving forces for educational governance reform combine in a dynamic mix, the result being an amalgamation of school divisions.

The amalgamation of schools divisions can be compared to a horizontal merger (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) and, as with any merger, one needs to address concerns with

regard to both strategic and organizational fit (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). A horizontal merger is generally viewed as either a collaborative effort or an organizational rescue (Pritchett, 1985), or a combination of the two; how it is viewed may well depend upon which side of the fence you are sitting on. The amalgamation or horizontal merger of school divisions results in a changed organizational structure.

Managing a school division amalgamation process involves attention to change management and resistance to change. During the merger process, the management of planned second-order change focuses on the technical, political, and cultural aspects of organizations (Tichy, 1983). Technical issues include the resolution of differences in employee benefits, policy, mill rates, and the division of assets as well as organizational design, costs of amalgamation, and technical resources. Political problems include the need for mechanisms to resolve disputes, conflicts arising from government policy and regulations, budget allocations, the distribution of power and influence, and accession decisions. Cultural aspects include individual and group transition management (Bridges, 1992) and the integration of cultures at both division and school levels (Marks & Mirvis, 1992).

Collaboration and consultation are paramount to success when one is grappling with technical, political and cultural issues as well as with issues of human resource management. Additional important elements to merger management involve leadership, individual and group participation, a team approach to problem-solving, and both internal and external support. Throughout the management of a merger process and key to its success is the need for open, continuous and complete *communication*. At the end of the process is a renewed organization which is visionary, learning, and technically, politically, and culturally aligned.

In addition, throughout the amalgamation, a process of transition is taking place among those involved in and affected by the change. Individuals are moving, in various

stages and at their own pace, through the iterative phases of organizational transition, namely, endings, regrouping and beginnings (Bridges, 1986, 1991, 1992).

Subsequent to the literature review, the researcher chose to apply Tichy's (1983) model of managing change strategically through the technical, political and cultural systems of an organization. Schools are public institutions and, as such, the governance of school systems are constantly influenced by externally imposed technical, political, and cultural pressures. These pressures affect the technical, political, and cultural systems within a school division. As organizations continue to undergo shifts and changes, alignment within and between these systems serve to reduce and manage organizational uncertainty. School division amalgamation is, without a doubt, a time of great organizational uncertainty. The researcher recognized that the choice of another framework such as Bolman and Deal's (1997, p. 15) "reframing organizations" model with its structural, human resource, political ,and symbolic components could have been used to analyse the merger process. However, it was the researcher's opinion that the strategic management of organizational change as described by Tichy was eminently suitable to the interpretation of a school division amalgamation process.

For similar reasons, the researcher chose to apply Bridges' (1986, p. 25) definitions of organizational change and transition to the process and management of a school division amalgamation. Change is situational and occurs at a particular point in time—the actual time of amalgamation. Transition is the "gradual psychological process through which individuals and groups reorient themselves so...they can function and find meaning in a changed situation" (Bridges, 1992, p. 17). Transition management is an important component of school division amalgamation success. Bridges' work on personal transition management within the context of organizational theory served to provide a foundation to develop a broader understanding of the complexities inherent in an amalgamation process.

The application of theory within the context of school division amalgamation, its process, and the management of the process continues to evolve. As Sabatier (1991, p. 153) observed, "Application of these theories in a variety of empirical settings, refining and expanding those that seem promising, rejecting those that do not, and developing new ones to take their place" are challenges still to be faced. The intention of this study is to make a contribution to this end.

This chapter has presented a review of the literature related to change, mergers, organizational transition, educational governance reform, and an explanation of the theoretical framework which underpins the study. The following chapter discusses and describes the research methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyse, within the context of organizational theory, the process and management of school division amalgamations. Focusing on mergers and transitions and the management of change, the process of amalgamation and the management of that process were examined and provided a foundation to develop a broader understanding of the complexities and dynamics inherent in school division amalgamations. Research efforts attempted to uncover the process of a school division amalgamation initiative and to identify key management aspects of the process. This chapter outlines the rationale for the case study approach to research, the design of the study, the methods of data analyses, and the procedures for establishing trustworthiness and maintaining research ethics.

Research Orientation: Paradigm of Inquiry

The notion of "paradigms" has been used by numerous writers to describe the manner in which individuals, groups, and societies view their world (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Kuhn, 1970; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This "world view" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105) or basic belief system is a human construction which guides individuals as they observe and make sense of their world. Likewise, this is also the case for a researcher's choice of research methodology. Regarding the choice of paradigm, Guba (1981) stated that:

> Chief among the paradigms that have been utilized in support of disciplined inquiry are the rationalistic and the naturalistic. There is no basis for choosing one of these paradigms over others in each and every situation. Rather, each rests on certain assumptions that must be tested in the context of application. (p. 76)

Affirming this open-minded stance, Schulman (1988) wrote: "We must first understand our problem and decide what questions we are asking, then select the mode of *disciplined inquiry* most appropriate to those questions" (p.15). Therefore, having given consideration to these issues, the researcher's choice of research paradigm in any given study is always "an act of judgement, grounded in both knowledge of methodology and the substantive area of investigation" (pp. 12-13).

The paradigm of choice in this study was the qualitative paradigm of disciplined inquiry. Going into the field with an open mind, the researcher carried out investigations in which the conclusions were *post hoc* rather than *a priori*. In other words, the researcher, "operating like the natural historian,...observes, records, classifies, and concludes, seeking...to capture the reality of the *subjects* and not only her or his own reality" (Lancy, 1993, p. 9). This phenomenological research process was, therefore, open to alternative constructions of reality, to many explanations for observed phenomena, and to a variety of data from many sources. Change became a part of the study, rather than invalidating it.

Given the varied history of qualitative research, the nominal references by which this form of inquiry is identified vary. Guba and Lincoln (1982, 1994) have, at different times, used the terms "naturalistic," "qualitative," and "constructivist." Quantz (1992) preferred the "postpositivist" or "postmodern" perspective while Stake (1984, 1988) and Fetterman (1982, 1988) used both "qualitative" and "naturalistic." More recently, Borg and Gall (1989), Creswell (1994), Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996), Kvale (1996), Lancy (1993), Merriam (1998), Rubin and Rubin (1995), Wolcott (1994), and Yin (1994) have displayed a preference for the term "qualitative research." For the purposes of this study, the term qualitative research or inquiry was used.

The paradigm of choice guides an investigator not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways. Guba and Lincoln (1994) noted that, from a qualitative paradigm, ontology—the form and nature of reality, is relativistic:

> Realities are...multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature...and dependent for their form and content on the individual[s]...or groups holding the constructions....Constructions are alterable, as are their associated "realities." (pp. 110, 111)

This viewpoint is supported by Merriam (1988, 1998) and Creswell (1994), as well as Schulman (1988) who wrote, "Ways of seeing are ways of knowing and of not knowing. And knowing well is knowing in more than one way" (p. 23). Using different lens to view the same phenomenon permits the researcher the possibility of self-correction. Indeed, the postmodern claim that there is no "grand theory" supports the viewpoint of a multiplicity of perspectives, a viewpoint which is particularly the case in the area of educational enterprise .

The epistemology—the origin, nature, and limits of knowledge, of qualitative research is both transactional or negotiated and subjective (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Findings are created as the investigation proceeds and are confirmed by the participants. Qualitative research is contextual and seeks to understand meanings as ascribed by participants and to describe how knowledge is socially organized, transmitted, and assessed (Merriam, 1998). It is through this interactive and iterative process that both the researcher and participant are enlightened.

The axiological assumption recognizes that qualitative research is value-laden and biased (Creswell, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1982, 1994). Inquiry is value-bound in numerous ways: by inquirer values—the choice, framing, bounding, and focusing of a problem (Merriam, 1998); by choice of the paradigm that guides investigation into the problem; by choice of the substantive theory which guides the collection and analysis of data and interpretation of findings; and by the values that are inherent in the context (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 38).

Methodologically, qualitative inquiry is both hermeneutical and dialectical (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). "Hermeneutical techniques ... are compared and contrasted through a

dialectical interchange [which aims to arrive at] a consensus construction that is more informed" (p.111) than any previous constructions of both researcher (etic) and participant (emic). In other words, the consensus construction is a "reconstruction of previously held constructions...and subject to continuous revision." (pp. 112, 114). Yet another writer, Creswell (1994), described methodological assumptions as: "[an] inductive process, [a] mutual simultaneous shaping of factors, [characterized by an] emerging design—categories identified during research process, context-bound, [through which] patterns and theories developed for understanding [are] accurate and reliable through verification" (p. 5). These viewpoints reflect the concept of "grounded theory" as espoused by Glaser and Strauss (1967) who argued that theory should be grounded in the data rather than being imposed in a preordained fashion: "Theory should emerge...it should never be just put together" (p. 41). Consequently, a "fit" between theory and data is achieved through the application of the "constant comparative" method which identifies, tries, and discards potential categories, guided by the researcher's "experience with the setting" (Patton, 1990, p. 14). The use of yet another effective tool in qualitative studies is provided by Yin (1994) who proposed the use of "analytical generalization" in which a previously developed theory can be used as a "template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study" (p. 31).

Adoption of the preceding assumptions of a qualitative research paradigm results in or has specific effect on the methodology used in the research process in the following ways:

1. Qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with process, rather than outcomes or products;

2. Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning—how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world;

3. The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines;

4. Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researcher physically goes to the site to observe and record behavior in its natural setting;

5. Qualitative research is descriptive. The researcher is interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures; and

6. The process of qualitative research is inductive. The researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details. (Merriam, 1998, pp. 29-31)

Based on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) "axioms of the naturalistic paradigm" (pp. 36-38), a list of characteristics that describe qualitative research include: holistic inquiry, natural setting, human as instrument, qualitative methods, purposive sampling, inductive data analysis, development of grounded theory, emergent design, subject involvement, intuitive insights, emphasis on social process, concern with context, description (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Borg & Gall, 1989; Gall et al., 1996). These descriptors are directly applicable to case studies as a research methodology.

In summary, qualitative research, as a methodological approach to systematic inquiry constructs the world view of the participants, giving meaning and conveying a sense of experience; provides explanatory frameworks within which cultural and contextual variables can be analysed; acquires event-structured knowledge which may assist in the development of meaningful process and/or policy; builds context-bound theory which is pragmatic in nature; and, as such, may influence how people interpret themselves and the situation, as well as lead to actions which have a positive effect on the individual(s)/event(s) being investigated.

Case Study Methodology

The appropriate process of investigation for this case study, as determined by the researcher, falls into the qualitative paradigm. Seeking to understand, from a management perspective, mergers and/or amalgamations, the researcher investigated this phenomenon through a particular event, the amalgamation of school divisions. The investigation attempted to understand the multiplicity of perspectives or realities of those involved in and affected by the amalgamation event.

The rationale for a single-case design in this descriptive study was based on observations made by Yin (1994). According to Yin, " the single-case design is eminently justifiable under certain conditions—where the case represents a critical test of existing theory, where the case is a rare or unique event, or where the case serves a revelatory purpose" (p. 44). In relation to this study, the "case" was the amalgamation of school divisions, and, while not universally unique, the case *was* unique within the context of current educational governance reform in Saskatchewan, being a first example of educational governance reform through amalgamation and the restructuring of three school divisions into two. As such, the case served a revelatory purpose, both for the process as well as the management of a change initiative. The case was, in this sense, unique and, as such, the findings may be generalizable to proposed and contemplated amalgamation efforts in the future (Hammersley, 1992, p. 191). Furthermore, the knowledge developed by focusing on this actual human problem may serve to increase our understanding of the nature of the problem and allow us to generate potential solutions and more effectively control our environment (Borg & Gall, 1989; Gall et al., 1996; Patton, 1990). Also, in accordance with Stake (1994), this study had as its aim the description and explanation of an event as it unfolded within a "bounded system ... the case [as] a functioning specific" (Stake, 1994, p. 236). The proposed case study emphasized the unity and wholeness of that system while "confining ... attention to those aspects that [were] relevant to the research problem at the time" (Stake, 1988, p. 258).

Commenting on the case study as a research methodology, Merriam (1988, pp. 11-13) described four essential properties:

1. Particularistic: the case study focuses on a particular situation, event, or phenomenon. The examination of a specific instance may illuminate a general pattern.
2. Descriptive: the end product is a rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study.
3. Heuristic: the case study will illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon being studied.
4. Inductive: case studies generally rely on inductive reasoning; the "discovery of new relationships, concepts, and understanding, rather than verification of predetermined hypotheses, characterizes qualitative case studies" (p. 13).

These essential properties of the case study provided a research framework which had the potential to increase insight into and understanding of the management of one school division amalgamation process. The study was particularistic in focusing upon a particular phenomenon, the process of school district amalgamation. The intention was to provide a rich, thick description of the management of the technical, political, and cultural aspects of the amalgamation process. The heuristic and inductive properties of the case study were developed from both the explanation and analysis of the research study and from testing the conceptual framework against the findings of the research.

In summary, the case study method appeared to be appropriate to the analysis of the process and management of school division amalgamations. The preceding ideas and considerations served as guides in outlining the design of the study. Elements which were deemed critical to making the research design a disciplined and systematic inquiry were study participants, data collection and recording, and data analysis and interpretation.

Study Participants

Researchers cannot include everyone to whom an educational issue applies. Therefore, it was necessary to design a selection strategy by which to choose sites, participants, and research techniques (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). This section describes the site, sample selection, and data collection methods of the study.

Selection of Site

Selection of the school divisions which participated in this study was based upon the following requirements: the divisions had to have initiated an amalgamation process with the process well underway and the divisions needed to be willing to participate in the research project. At this point in time, Saskatchewan had 119 school divisions, 92 of those being public school divisions (Langlois & Scharf, 1991). At least five areas scattered throughout the province were considering amalgamation and a number of initial studies had been undertaken. However, in all but one of the areas, the proposed amalgamations were in a holding pattern, reluctant for a variety of reasons to undertake the marital plunge. As a result, the choice of a research site became very limited; indeed, there was only one location actively pursuing school division amalgamation. The school divisions in this area were approached and agreed to participate in the researcher's proposed study of the amalgamation process and its management. In retrospect, it is the researcher's opinion that this situation had little, if any, negative influence on the value of the research project. The selected site was a first example of actual educational governance reform subsequent to the Minister of Education's decisions that school divisions explore, consider, and undertake amalgamation on a voluntary basis. A study of the first divisions in the province to actually amalgamate served a revelatory purpose, both for the process of school division amalgamation and the management of that process. In this instance, the case study was a rare and unique event which allowed the critical testing of organizational theory

within the context of school division amalgamations (Yin, 1994). It is of interest to note that a number of school division amalgamations have occurred since the inception of this study and the fall of 1999; the number of school divisions in the province currently total 100 (see Appendix D).

In addition, the selected site was geographically located in an area unfamiliar to the researcher, thus minimizing researcher disruption or distortion of the setting as well as allowing the "insider's perspective" to enhance the study and contribute to enriched understandings (Wolcott, 1985, p. 199).

Role of Participants

While a primary role of participants in qualitative inquiry is one of sharing their perception of what constitutes their "reality" within the context of the study, participants are also involved in the

> advancement of understanding [from] what happens to be currently adopted and proceed to integrate and organize, weed out and supplement, not in order to arrive at truth about something already made but in order to make something right—to construct something that works cognitively, that fits together and handles new cases, that may implement further inquiry and invention. (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127)

This construction unfolded through a "dialectic of iteration, analysis, critique, reiteration, reanalysis, and so on that [led] eventually to a joint...[enquirer and participants] construction of a case" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.179). In other words, the involvement of the participants was crucial throughout the entire research inquiry process. Participant involvement was realized through the use of an interview format that provided the primary data for the study and required participants to give voice to their amalgamation experiences. Participants were also provided with the opportunity to read and verify the authenticity of their own interview transcripts, as well as to add additional

comments or observations if they so desired. Finally, whenever there was a need to clarify or verify responses, the participants were contacted and consulted.

Sampling

In order to address questions posed by qualitative research inquiry, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) rationale for sampling provided a conceptual guide for the identification of appropriate participants: "The purpose of sampling will most often be to include as much information as possible, in all its various ramifications and constructions" (p. 201). With this in mind, the strategy of purposeful selection of informants, as described by Patton (1990), was used to select information-rich participants for in-depth study. Using stratified purposeful sampling to identify those who best exemplified individuals and groups who had participated in or been affected by the amalgamation process and who had been a part of the phenomenon under study facilitated data collection and provided for the comparison and identification of characteristics within particular subgroups of interest (see Appendix B for a breakdown of research participants). Half of the participants came from each of the respective school divisions and of the 25 interviews conducted, thirteen participants were members of the Amalgamation Steering Committee. With the exception of a spokesperson for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, research participants played an active role within the two educational systems. The majority of interview participants resided within the school divisions and, as such, were also parent or non-parent ratepayers. The two student focus groups included grade nine, ten, and eleven students from two communities within the smaller school division.

Furthermore, as recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (1992, pp. 66-67), once interviews were underway and themes began to emerge, examples of negative cases were provided. In this way, the purposeful selection of participants brought new perspectives and insights to the evolving themes that were grounded in the data. Additional interviewees were identified through the snowball sampling technique, a technique by

which those interviewed recommended other participants (Lincoln & Guba). Once permission was received to conduct research in the respective school divisions, the Directors and Boards of Education were contacted to assist in the identifying and contacting of participants in the study. Follow-up contact with each of these individuals or groups was made by the researcher. It was anticipated this sampling process would result in the selection of participants who would be able to offer insights into the process and management of school division amalgamations.

Data Collection and Recording

The collection of data was guided by the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 as well as by the theoretical framework of the study. The following section addressed the human as research instrument, data collection, and data transformation.

Human as Instrument: The Researcher

Qualitative researchers need to have a tolerance for ambiguity, be highly intuitive, and be a good communicator (Merriam, 1998, p. 20). Lincoln and Guba (1985) characterized the advantages of direct human-researcher involvement as a primary data gathering instrument in qualitative research as: responsiveness, adaptability, holistic emphasis, knowledge base expansion, opportunities for classification and summarization, and opportunity to explore atypical or idiosyncratic responses (pp. 193-194). The participants of a qualitative inquiry are found "in an 'as is' situation with ... their attendant contextual variations, peculiarities, idiosyncrasies, and complexities" (Gulka, 1992, p. 89). Nevertheless, it is this same interactive, complex and fluid context of qualitative inquiries which poses substantial difficulties in the design of an adequate and appropriate instrument which captures the essence of the study focus. This instrumental problem was recognized by Borg and Gall (1989): "No human instrument is sufficiently flexible to adapt to the complete situation as it evolves and to identify and take into account biases that result

from the interaction and value differences between the "instrument and the subjects" (p. 385). For this reason, in the interests of establishing trustworthiness, multiple data sources and triangulation are recommended.

As the researcher determined the issues for study, a personal contract was drawn between the researcher and phenomenon (Stake, 1994, p. 239). Using the researcher as instrument served to standardize the "data collection 'instrument' across [the respective school divisions] without sacrificing the potential for in-depth description" (Herriott & Firestone, 1983, p. 18). The selection of a semi-structured interview format served to provide increased structure and uniformity across sites, once again without sacrificing the "thickness" of the qualitative inquiry.

The inquiry topic originated, in part, from an earlier study which investigated stakeholder perceptions of school division amalgamation issues and concerns (Reddyk, 1995). A qualitative format guided this earlier research experience and therefore, the researcher brought to this study some experience with the qualitative mode of educational inquiry.

Data Collection Techniques

Both Wolcott (1992, 1994) and Glesne and Peshkin (1992) identified three major modes through which qualitative researcher's gather their data: (a) interviews or inquiring, (b) studying documents relevant to the study or examining, and (c) observations or experiencing/field notes. For the purposes of this case study, the two predominant modes of data collection consisted of interviews and the study of relevant documents. Furthermore, with the human (researcher) as instrument as the primary and preferred data collection technique (Merriam, 1998), a multi-modal approach to data collection in order to ensure variety, validity, credibility, and trustworthiness of data was undertaken (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Le Compte & Goetz, 1982; Wolcott, 1994; Yin, 1994).

Interviews. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) stated that interviewing, an important ethnographic data collection technique, is "used to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (p. 135). The accumulation of this "tangible data... recorded in [the] informants' own words ... are amenable to searching and sorting for themes" (Wolcott, 1994). Thus, an interview is a conversation with a purpose, typified by an open phenomenological approach to learning from the interview (Kvale, 1996).

In keeping with the paradigm, the qualitative interviewing design was "*flexible, iterative, and continuous*...[allowing researchers to] find and winnow their research topics while adapting the topics to their interests and personalities and to the interests and knowledge of the interviewees" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995. p. 43). Kvale (1996) used the following descriptors to identify qualification criteria for the interviewer: knowledgeable, structuring, clear, gentle, sensitive, open, steering, critical, remembering, and interpreting (pp. 148-149). Because the purpose of the interview is to gather, through conversation, relevant, valid, and important information about the topic under investigation, Kvale (1996) defined the qualitative research interview purpose as "obtaining qualitative descriptions of the life world of the subject with respect to interpretation of their meaning" (p. 124). As most case studies are about human affairs, these human affairs should be "reported and interpreted through the eyes of specific interviewees ... well -informed respondents can provide important insights into a situation" (Yin, 1994, p. 85) as well as aiding in the understanding of the prior situation and the identification of other relevant sources of information. Interviews are targeted and focus directly on the topic, providing insightful information. However, as verbal reports, interviews are subject to the problems of bias due to poorly constructed questions, response bias, inaccuracies due to poor recall, and reflexivity (p. 80). This necessitates the corroboration of interview data with information from other sources.

As stated previously, the primary sources of information were the interview and documentary data. The collected data was cross-checked with other interviews and documentary data for verification and to determine the weight of the evidence. In this study, semi-structured interviews were utilized as the primary data collection mode. Borg and Gall (1989) described semi-structured interviews as including:

> Some highly structured questions in the interview guide, but they will aim primarily toward a semistructured level [where] the interviewer first asks a series of structured questions and then probes more deeply, using open-ended questions in order to obtain more complete data. (p. 452)

A degree of structure ensures that, "at least in part, all participants...do receive some questions in common" (Carruthers, 1990, p. 66) which makes possible "comparable data across *subjects*" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 71). With this in mind, an initial interview guide was prepared and contained questions pertaining to the major areas of inquiry as suggested by the research questions (see Appendix C for the initial interview guide). Generally, these questions were asked of all interviewees. However, in order to encourage the subjects to structure their own account of the situation and to introduce what they recognized as relevant, the exact form and structure of the interview varied. The researcher was prepared to pursue points of interest through in-depth probing. During the interview, questions were rephrased to check the accuracy of interpretation as well as the perceptions of the respondents. As the research progresses, it was valuable to interview particular individuals a second time in order to confirm or gain additional information.

In addition, the technique of interviewing participants in a focus group setting was used in the fieldwork phase of the study. The interviewer "creates a permissive environment, asking focused questions in order to encourage discussion and the expression of differing opinions and points of view" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 84). This format allowed the researcher the flexibility to explore issues as they surfaced in the discussion and to increase the number of participants interviewed. When using a focus

group sampling technique, the researcher needed to be cognizant of psychological factors which may impact on the nature of data collected (Carey, 1994, pp. 234-239). These may include the impact of first impressions, the state and perceptual bias of individuals, and the adjusting of a person's behavior so as to conform to that of the group. At the individual level, factors which may effect participation included trust, deviancy, anonymity, self esteem, previous experience with groups, experience related to the topic, gender, and affiliation needs. Group level psychological factors embody group size, unanimity, history of agreement, and group cohesiveness. Merton, Fiske, and Kendall (1990) suggested researchers can minimize the negative aspects and maximize the advantages of focus group interviews by attending to the basic tenets of retrospection, the range of experiences, specificity, and personal context of group members.

Interviewees were contacted by letter or phone and given an explanation of the study. If granted, the interview was audiotaped and transcribed. If the interviewee did not wish to be audiotaped, interview notes and a detailed account were recorded immediately after the interview.

Document collection. Numerous writers recommend the use of written resources as additional sources of information where appropriate (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Wolcott, 1994; Yin, 1994). As another source of information, documents serve to corroborate the multi-modal approach of qualitative inquiry and assist in establishing trustworthiness and credibility (Wolcott). Yin proposed three principles for data collection which will result in a convergence of multiple sources of evidence: use of multiple sources of evidence, creation of a case study data base, and maintaining a chain of evidence (pp. 90-99). The three principles described are steps to quality control, construct validity and reliability. The value of documents is described by Glesne and Peshkin (1992, pp. 52-54): "Documents corroborate your observations and interviews and thus make your findings more trustworthy. Beyond corroboration, [documents] may raise questions...and thereby shape new directions for observations and

interviews....Documents provide both historical and contextual dimensions to your [research]." Furthermore, documents enable a researcher to obtain the language and words of informants which can be assessed at a time convenient to the researcher, serving as an unobtrusive source of information (Cresswell, 1994, pp. 150-151). However, researchers need to exercise caution when using documents in qualitative studies. Interpreting documents or written text involves dealing with mute evidence. Texts or the written word endures and gives historical insight. However, the author's intent and the context and interpretations attributed to the text by the reader can be notably dissimilar. "The possibility of multiple reinterpretations is increased [and] the text can "say" many different things in different contexts" (Hodder, 1994, p. 394).

The primary source of documentary data for the study was the procedural handbooks which were compiled by the respective divisions as the amalgamation process took place. This documentation served to provide an institutional perspective. Specifically, documentation from meetings with regard to amalgamation was valuable in developing an understanding of the history of the amalgamation process within the case study and helped to identify similarities and dissimilarities in process, the identification and resolution of concerns, and perspectives between both school divisions and school districts. Additional documentary data included minutes of the respective school board meetings, school communications to parents, and newspaper articles. Wherever appropriate, participants supplied documents to support the interview discussions.

Observations. Observational data was limited to the collection of field notes and the researcher's log. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) identified two types of field notes: descriptive and reflective. The descriptive aspect of field notes encompassed portraits of the subjects, reconstruction of dialogue, description of the physical setting, accounts of particular events, and descriptions of behavior both of the interviewee and the observer (pp. 120-121). The reflective element focused on analysis, procedures, and strategies used and decisions about the emerging design of the study, ethical dilemmas, the observer's

frame of mind, and points of clarification (pp. 122-123). Reflective field notes served to acknowledge and control observer's effect and develop an awareness of any researcher bias (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Transformation of Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation

A considerable body of literature has addressed the topic of qualitative data analysis and interpretation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Fontana & Frey, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Guba & Lincoln, 1982, 1989; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Kvale, 1996; Lancy, 1993; Lincoln, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Wolcott, 1994; Yin, 1994). Researchers have approached the problematic of transforming data—description, analysis, and interpretation, from a variety of viewpoints. Kvale (1996) approached data transformation as occurring within a continuum of description and interpretation, while Huberman & Miles (1994) applied an inter-active model which used a conceptual framework to link the sub-processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Lincoln and Guba (1985) elaborated on Glaser and Strauss' (1967) Constant Comparative Method for analysing qualitative data by comparing incidents applicable to each category, integrating categories and their properties, delimiting the theory, and writing the theory. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Patton (1990) espoused reading and analysing the documented data with reference to the research questions, to be followed by identifying potential themes, questions, and emerging theories through inductive analysis and cross-validation of the information. Yin (1994) relied on theoretical propositions to develop a case description through the use of pattern-matching, explanation-building, time-series analysis, program logic models, analysing embedded units, and making repeated observations.

Finally, Wolcott (1994, pp. 12-45) spoke of *transforming qualitative data* through *description*, constructing data out of experience; *analysis*, following systematic

procedures in order to identify essential features and relationships; and *interpretation*, transcending factual data, cautious analysis, and beginning to probe what is to be made of them. It is this framework for the transformation of data that the researcher used. In order to construct *data* out of *experience*, the researcher, using critical judgement, selected details relevant to the study's purpose, and, in doing so, provided a "thick description" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1998) of the event. The chronology of the amalgamation process provided an order to the description and allowed the researcher to focus on the management of critical events. Secondly, the analysis of data— inherently conservative, careful, and systematic, consisted of entering responses on charts for each question according to categories of participant groups and recurring replies, allowing for the identification of potential themes, questions, and emerging theories and the organization of the data, both categorically and chronologically (Merriam, 1988). As stated by Patton (1990, p. 390): "inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis...emerge from the data rather then being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis." As a final step, the study findings were interpreted in reference to the conceptual framework of the study, allowing theory to provide a way to link the case study with larger issues such as change theory and transition management. In this way, results from the data were compared to the literature to determine if any congruency existed between the literature and the research findings.

In summary, it is readily apparent that the data analysis must be of high quality. Yin (1994) offered several principles which appear to underlie all good research. The analysis should "show that it relied on *all the relevant evidence*,...include[d] all major rival interpretations, ...address[ed] *the most significant aspect*[s] *of* [the] *case*,...[and provided an opportunity for the researcher to bring his/her] own *prior, expert knowledge* to the case" (pp. 124-125). It is the researcher's opinion that the transformation of the collected data through the steps of description, analysis, and interpretation met these requirements.

Research Trustworthiness

For a study to establish trustworthiness, consideration must be given to procedures which foster credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). These four terms are the qualitative equivalent to internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The aspects of truth value (credibility), applicability (transferability), consistency (dependability) and neutrality (confirmability) have, within the naturalistic framework of research, distinct meanings, strengths, and concerns that need to be acknowledged and addressed.

Credibility. Credibility relates to the truth value of a study and its findings and corresponds to the notion of internal validity. Adequate engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation are activities which increased the probability that credible findings would be produced (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To this end, sufficient time was invested to learn the "culture," test for misinformation, and build trust. Persistent observation served to identify those characteristics and elements that were most relevant to the problem and to focus on them in detail. Triangulation of the interview data with a variety of participants in different roles as well as with available documentation added to the credibility of findings and interpretations. Member checks permitted participants to respond to written summaries of data. Peer debriefing with the researcher's advisor served to avoid possible researcher bias, provided an opportunity to test emerging hypotheses, and facilitated in the development of the emerging methodological design.

Another viewpoint on credibility is provided by Rubin and Rubin (1995) who proposed that "researchers judge the credibility of qualitative work by its *transparency, consistency-coherence,* and *communicability;* they design the interviewing to achieve these standards" (p. 85). A transparent report enables the reader to see the basic processes of data collection and to assess the intellectual strengths and weakness, the biases, and the conscientiousness of the interviewer. This involves the maintenance of careful records

through the use of transcripts, field notes, and a research log (pp. 85-87). Consistency coherence implies the researcher checked out responses that appeared to be inconsistent and that themes in interviews were examined for coherence with themes presented in other interviews. Coherence, according to Eisner (1998, pp. 53-56), is evident when conclusions are supported by multiple data sources, observations are congruent with the study, there is structural corroboration, and when readers concur that the findings/interpretations reported by the investigator are consistent with their own experience. Rubin and Rubin noted the goal is *not* to eliminate inconsistencies, but to *understand* them in order to arrive at more thoughtful and nuanced responses (pp. 87-91). Communicability refers to the manner in which the researcher communicates or reports what it means to be within the research arena. Clear writing and the use of quotes to corroborate key points enabled participants to see themselves in the descriptions and readers to be swept along by the vividness and clarity of examples (pp. 91-92). Finally, Stake (1984) maintained that a case study is valid or credible "to the reader to whom it gives an accurate and useful representation of the bounded system" (p. 263).

Transferability. Transferability relates to how generalizable the findings of a study are to a larger population (Borg & Gall, 1989; Gall et al., 1996). Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggested that to extend results from qualitative interviews, the researcher needs to attend to the selection of interviewees who can provide grounded and accurate information. This process continues until the inquiry reaches a point of completeness or saturation. The saturation point is manifested when the information begins to repeat itself. At that point, the researcher and reader(s) can extend what has been learned beyond the original setting and the original interviewees by a logic of comparison" (p. 76). This viewpoint raises the question of who determines the generalizability of findings, the researcher or the reader? According to Stake (1994), "Most [qualitative] researchers will concentrate on describing the...case in sufficient detail so that the reader can make good comparisons" (p. 241). It is valuable to note that qualitative research findings are based

upon what occurs within the context of the research arena and, as such, it was "not the [researcher's] task to provide an *index* of transferability, it was his or her responsibility to provide the *data base* that makes transferability judgements possible on the part of potential appliers" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). Yin (1994, p. 10) observed: "Case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes...The investigator's goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytical generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization). The final onus, then, was on the reader to decide if the findings within a particular context could be applied to another setting. With this in mind, it was important to provide descriptions to present an accurate picture of the situation which would enable the reader to formulate judgements on the extent to which the findings might be transferrable. With this in mind, the researcher gave particular emphasis to highlighting the unique contexts and settings of the case study site.

Dependability and confirmability. Confirmability, the objectivity of a study in terms of its procedures, orientation, and methodology, addressed the degree of researcher bias that had been allowed to influence the proceedings. The inquiry audit, a technique proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), served to authenticate the study. A number of strategies were employed to ensure the dependability and confirmability of this study. First, recognized ethnographic data collection techniques and an accepted method of qualitative inquiry, the case study, was utilized for this research. A deliberate effort was made to solicit the participants' stories in their own voices. Participants were given the opportunity to review and confirm the completeness and accuracy of information. Finally, the research advisor, acting in the capacity of auditor, examined the process by which the accounts were kept, thus confirming the researcher has fairly represented the positions of the research participants. Determination of the acceptability of this process attested to the dependability of the inquiry. Furthermore, an examination of the product—the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations by the research advisor, confirmed that the

research study was supported by data and internally coherent. This process established the confirmability and dependability of the inquiry.

To this end, an audit trail was developed. The audit trail included the collection of raw data through an interview process; the data reduction and analysis products; data reconstruction and synthesis products, and the structure of categories, findings, and conclusions. Raw data in the form of interview tapes, transcripts, and amalgamation binders, as well as the data reduction and analysis charts have been delivered to the research advisor and stored as evidence of the authenticity of the grounded data and research process. The final report connected the research findings to the existing literature and integrated the concepts, relationships, and interpretations of the study. The establishment of these appropriate audit trail linkages served to ascertain that the findings of the study were grounded in the data. As recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985), feedback from the research advisor, renegotiation, and the writing of the final report served to bring closure to the research study.

Summary. The design of a study must, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 247), arrange for credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability which, collectively, combine towards trustworthiness. Exemplified by disciplined inquiry, trustworthiness confers legitimation on a study (Owens, 1982). Therefore, the researcher must "take measures while in the field to increase the probability of a judgement of trustworthiness as well as to test for it directly" (Lincoln & Guba, p. 267). These techniques included data collection, triangulation, member checks, collection of referential adequacy materials, developing thick description, peer debriefing, and audit trail.

Research Ethics

"The ethical principle of *beneficence* means that the risk of harm to a subject should be the least possible" (Kvale, 1996, p. 116). In this sense, naturalistic inquiry which follows the case study method and uses an interview format is a moral enterprise. Because the "objects of inquiry are human beings, extreme care must be taken to avoid any harm to them" (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 372). The researcher investigating the realities of an event must keep in mind issues of constraints, power imbalances, researcher imposition, and consideration of unintended/unknown consequences. Kvale (1996) pointed out that ethical decisions do not belong only to the interview investigation, but throughout the entire research process. His seven research stages (p. 111) highlighted the following issues:

- Thematizing—The purpose of an interview study should be considered with regard to improvement of the human situation investigated.
- Designing—Attention must be paid to obtaining the subjects' informed consent, securing confidentiality, and considering possible consequences of the study for the subjects.
- Interviewing—The confidentiality of the subjects' reports needs to be clarified and consequences such as stress and self-image considered.
- Transcription—Confidentiality of information and the loyal written transcription of an interviewee's oral statements is required.
- Analysis—The researcher, with participant input, will determine how deeply and critically the interviews can be analysed and whether the subjects should have a say in how their statements were interpreted.
- Verification—It is the ethical responsibility of the researcher to report knowledge that is as secured and verified as possible.

- Reporting—The researcher is required to consider issues of confidentiality as well as the consequences of the published report for the interviewees and the group or institution they represent.

In a similar vein, Bogdan and Biklen (1992, pp. 49-51) offered the following study guidelines: provide anonymity, treat subjects with respect, seek their cooperation, abide by the terms of the agreement, and be truthful.

It is readily apparent that ethical considerations require research to be technically competent and rigorous and analysis to be professionally interpreted. With this in mind, ethical guidelines were followed to ensure all individuals in the study were accorded respect and consideration. Permission to conduct the research was received from the University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Human Experimentation (see Appendix K). Contact was made with the administrative personnel in each of the school divisions and permission to do research obtained. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the nature of all procedures of conducting the research and using the data, and that participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time (see Appendix L). Confidentiality and anonymity were protected by removing from quotes and descriptions all names and details of participants which might break the anonymity of participants. It is for this reason, in order to provide confidentiality and anonymity, that a limited number of quotes do not include an identifying interview number. In addition, respondents were given the opportunity to read and make changes to their interview transcripts, thus verifying the authenticity of the interview transcripts.

The following chapter describes the historical context of educational governance reform and rural demographic change, provides a description of the participating school divisions, and discusses characteristics of rural life.

CHAPTER 4

EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND THE SASKATCHEWAN STORY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the context, both historical and present day, of educational governance reform and life in rural Saskatchewan. The description will serve to broaden our understanding of why the amalgamation of school divisions has again become an issue in educational governance. The chapter will begin with a history of school division amalgamation and rural demographic change. These changes will be correlated to the context of the case study through a description of the participating school divisions. The chapter concludes with a discussion on aspects of community and life in a rural setting.

Historical Context: Educational Governance

As education in Canada is a provincial responsibility, each province and territory has its own and somewhat unique approach to education governance and reform. Indicative of the continued interest in governance restructuring, the Canadian School Board Association (1997, p. 1) identified the following national trends within provincial education systems:

> reduction in the number of school boards, re-definition of school board powers and responsibilities, centralization of power at the provincial/territorial level, greater parent/community involvement through mandated advisory councils, gradual implementation of minority governance rights for Francophone and Aboriginal groups, growing movement towards school choice including charter schools, and service integration.

(See Appendix D for a 1999 overview of educational governance in Canada.)

Resulting from constitutional guarantees, publicly funded systems with separate school board governance structures exist in Saskatchewan to serve in the education of

children: the public system, the Roman Catholic system, the First Nations system and the Francophone system. Throughout the history of education in the Province of Saskatchewan, issues of governance, structure and administration have provided a source of ongoing debate and examination. In the past, efforts to amalgamate school divisions were linked to government efforts to bring a fragmented and diverse system under control, both financially and educationally. When the province was organized in 1905, there were 896 school districts in existence and, by 1921, 4,522 districts had been established (Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, 1956). Most of these districts were in rural areas of the province and many consisted of a single one-room school. In 1907, *The Secondary Education Act* provided for the formation of Secondary School Districts. Studies such as the Foght Report (1918) and the Jacoby Commission (1936) and mechanisms such as winter community schools and union schools did little to encourage consolidation for, in 1941, Saskatchewan had 4,808 administrative units (Funk, 1971, p. 103).

In 1947, *The School Act, the Larger Units Act and the School Grants Act* allowed for the formation of school units upon the order of the Minister of Education and, over the ensuing years, larger school units became the norm. 1964 saw the establishment of comprehensive schools and in 1996, although the governance structure remained unchanged, the term "school unit" was replaced by "school division" (The Education Act, 1978). By 1993, in addition to urban, separate, and some remaining small school divisions, there were 62 larger rural school divisions or units in Saskatchewan (SSTA,1993, p. 3).

A major overview of the needs of the education system in Saskatchewan by Langlois and Scharf (1991) evaluated the financing and governance of education. Education reform, according to Langlois and Scharf, would benefit from a reorganization of school divisions into units large enough geographically to generate sufficient enrolment to offer a full service K-12 program. The study recommended the existing 92 public

school divisions be reorganized into 14 or 15 divisions with an average enrolment of 7,000.

In 1993, The Saskatchewan School Trustees Association (SSTA) established a task force to examine education restructuring and one of its major recommendation, like the Langlois and Scharf study (1991), was that school division size should increase. The SSTA study recommended there should be approximately 35 divisions in the province with roughly 2,500 to 5,000 students in each. These larger units would be capable of delivering education services effectively while reducing administrative expenses and offering a more diversified program. The study argued that divisions of this size could better withstand enrolment declines and still remain viable.

Subsequent to these reports and following provincial-wide public consultations with education stakeholders in 1996, the Department of Education determined that any restructuring of school divisions should be voluntary and locally directed (SSTA, 1997). As of July 1, 1998, there were, for the first time in many years, fewer than 100 operating school divisions in Saskatchewan (see Appendix E). These amalgamations have included numerous public school divisions as well as Roman Catholic divisions. Within the last year, the Francophone education community has restructured from nine governance boards to one central board with parent and community representative councils in every school. The total number of school divisions in Saskatchewan has been reduced from 119 to 100 as of September 1, 1999. This number includes several school divisions which do not have operating schools (Government of Saskatchewan, 1998; R. Johnson, personal communication, SSTA Research Center, October 19, 1999). In 1999 (Cross Canada Chart, 1999) Saskatchewan had 700 trustees, 831 schools, and 191,000 students. The province provides 40% of the educational funding through a provincial foundation grant and Boards generate 58% of funding from property tax base through locally determined levies and 2% from tuition fees. Teacher negotiations take place under a two-tiered system

with a provincial government-trustee (5-4) bargaining committee and local bargaining on certain required matter and other locally determined issues (Cross Canada Chart).

Rural Demography

Over the years, Statistics Canada has tracked both the growth and decline of rural communities across Canada. Stabler, Olfert, and Fulton (1992, p. 3) pointed out that "rural economies across North America...have been under considerable stress during the 1980s." This has certainly been the case in Canada as rural areas continue to experience population decline. For Canada as a whole, the 1992 rural population constituted 30 percent of Canada's total population (Stabler et al., 1992) and by 1996, the rural population had dropped to 22 percent (Stabler & Olfert, 1996; Statistics Canada, 1996.) Provincially, in 1992, 50 percent of Saskatchewan's population lived in rural areas or communities with fewer than 10,000 residents (Stabler et al., 1992), while the 1996 Census (Statistics Canada) placed only 36 percent of Saskatchewan's population in the same category. Furthermore, the greatest decline in rural population continues to occur in those areas most distant from urban centers. Saskatchewan, having one of the highest concentrations of employment in agriculture in North America, has not been immune to international and national trends of rural depopulation and economic instability. "Continentwide, less than 5 percent of the labor force is engaged in agriculture, while, for Saskatchewan, the corresponding figure is approximately 18 percent" (Stabler et al., 1992, p.1). Factors contributing to the unfavorable circumstances which characterize rural Saskatchewan include the consolidation of farm holdings and the outmigration of farm families from rural areas, the change in shopping patterns of rural dwellers, ever lower commodity prices, and more recently, the shift from a product-producing to a services-dominated industrial structure (Stabler, Olfert, & Greuel, 1996, pp. 3-4).

Analogous to the declining population in rural Saskatchewan has been a decline in the rural school population. Since 1930, total enrolment in the province decreased from over 230,000 to approximately 195,000 in the 1990's while urban enrolments increased by approximately 66,000 students over this period, from approximately 35,000 to over 100,000. Other areas of the province, including the rural areas, small towns, and villages, experienced a decline of over 100,000 students from 1930 to1990, decreasing from slightly over 190,000 to just over 90,000 (Langlois & Scharf, 1991). The most recent figures available, as of September 30, 1998, recorded Saskatchewan's total student population at 190,917 (R. Johnson, personal communication, SSTA Research Center, October 19, 1999). That is to say, since 1930 total enrolment in the province has decreased by approximately 39,000 students, although the decrease in numbers of rural students is much higher, well in excess of 100,000 pupils.

Rural school divisions in Saskatchewan had a substantial decrease in enrolment of over 20,000 students from 1976 to1990. As a reflection of this decline in school population, between 1979 and 1990, over 100 schools in Saskatchewan were closed and education services were centralized in order to increase program offerings (Langlois & Scharf, 1991). In 1991 Langlois and Scharf stated that approximately one-quarter of all divisions had enrolments under 500 students and close to three-quarters had fewer than 1,500 students.

Just as the declining rural population in Saskatchewan has reduced market size for businesses located in rural areas, leading to their consolidation into fewer and more geographically dispersed centers (Stabler et al., 1992), the declining rural school population has resulted in a need to restructure school divisions so as to enable the divisions to provide a full range of services to students and staff. As part of the public sector, the education system is facing some form of restructuring in rural areas in order to deliver education services to a widely dispersed population.

In addition to demographic issues—an aging and increasingly urbanized population, the delivery of education in Northern Saskatchewan, and child poverty, the SSTA (1998) identified other challenges for K-12 education in Saskatchewan as: responsibilities of the education system—values and ethics in schools, accountability, confidence in the education system, and renewal and continuous improvement; working together—sustaining publicly-funded education, partnerships, integrated services, and parental involvement; responding to the needs of students—equity in education, special education, and First Nations; the school program —the school program, transitions from high school to post-secondary education and work, technology, and alternate delivery of education in rural schools; and staffing issues, the recruitment and retention of educational administrators and teachers.

Turnhill and Beaver Flat School Divisions: Developing the Context

Located in a region of grain and mixed farms and home to a culturally diverse people, the Turnhill and Beaver Flat School Divisions[1] have experienced, over time, both the ups and downs of Saskatchewan's rural economy, the growth and recession of local communities, and improved public services at ever increasing costs. However, there are distinct dissimilarities between the two divisions.

Municipalities in the Beaver Flat School Division continue to experience the decline in population endemic to most rural municipalities in Saskatchewan. The municipalities had experienced a population change from 1991 to 1996 which ranged from -7.3 percent to -20.5 percent (Statistics Canada, 1998); the percent of population ages 15

---

[1] In order to provide anonymity, the pseudonyms of Turnhill and Beaver Flat will be used to represent the two school divisions. This choice of names is of nostalgic significance to the researcher who, in childhood days, attended Turnhill School—a rural, multi-grade school in southern Saskatchewan. Beaver Flat was the name of a general store, post office and service center located in the same district. Additional pseudonyms will be added as required; in each case, the name used is that of a school no longer in existence.

and over accounted for 77 to 83 percent of the total population. Although Saskatchewan's population remained stable from 1991 to 1996 (Statistics Canada, 1988), urban centers and rural areas surrounding the urban centers continued to grow, while rural areas which were more distant from urban centers continued to experience a population decline (see Table 2). For example, all rural areas and towns in the Beaver Flat Division have experienced a decline in population, have lower percentages of school age children in both rural areas and towns, and have extremely low percentages of pre-school children. Approximately half of the towns' residents are 55 or over. In Beaver Flat's rural areas, approximately 60 per cent of the labour force is engaged in farming, while the remainder of the rural labour force works off the farm in manufacturing, construction, and service industries.

On the other hand, all communities in the Turnhill Division are fairly close to a large urban center and this is reflected in the communities and towns which are experiencing steady growth. Nearly one-third of the population is of school-age, the percentage of pre-school children is considerably higher than in Beaver Flat, and the adult population is, on the whole, younger.

Given the above, the Beaver Flat School Division was faced with the acute problem of how to maintain educational services in the face of shrinking enrolments from approximately 1200 students in 1976 to 600 students in 1995, a concomitant loss of eight teachers, and declining government grants and increasing costs. At the same time, the Beaver Flat Division was attempting to respond to the expectation of providing a high level of services without increases in taxation levels.

The Beaver Flat School Division was established in 1946 and, at one time, served over 2500 students. By 1976 the enrollment had dropped to just over 1200 pupils. During more recent times, Beaver Flat consisted of five subdivisions, each enjoying a K-12 facility. The Beaver Flat School Division generally consists of family farm communities

Table 2

Beaver Flat and Turnhill Demographics (Statistics Canada, 1996)

All figures are percentages.	Beaver Flat Rural Area[1]	Beaver Flat Town[1]	Beaver Flat Rural Area[2]	Beaver Flat Town[2]	Turnhill Rural Area[1]	Turnhill Town[2] Bedroom Community	Turnhill Town[2] Centrally Located
Population Change from 1991 to 1996	-20.5	-11.3	-11.6	-10.3	-3.0	5.0	7.4
School-age children (5-19)	22.0	14.0	21.0	16.5	30.0	33.0	27.5
Pre-school children (0-4)	3.2	3.5	5.0	3.8	5.8	9.6	8.3
Population (15 and over)	83.0	82.0	83.0	83.0	76.0	66.0	73.0
Population (55 and over)	32.0	53.0	29.0	48.0	20.0	6.6	53.0
Labour Force Employed in Primary Industries (mainly agricultural)	66.0	13.0	58.0	8.6	NA	3.5	3.0

which are primarily engaged in mixed and grain farming. However, with agriculture being the major occupation and due to conditions previously described, the school division continued to experience a steady decline in both rural and student population. By 1992, some 600 students were served by the division. School closures/consolidations occurred, classroom space in the remaining schools was underutilized, and support services in areas such as curriculum development and counseling were no longer available. For the last few years, both the Director and Secretary-Treasurer were employed on a part-time .6 basis. Beaver Flat had become a school division comprised of three sub-divisions, each with a K-12 school, and a Hutterite colony. Two First Nation Bands are located within the division.

Although the communities within the Beaver Flat School Division describe themselves as "rural," each has its own individual character. The town of Longford is an

active and largely self-sufficient community providing a full range of services to the area—from banks, food outlets, automotive repair, and agricultural services to a hospital and a nursing home. Restaurant menus feature perogies and cabbage rolls. Community sports include hockey, curling, and baseball. Longford is rightfully proud of its Ukranian heritage and this is reflected in its annual New Years Celebration and Ukranian Dance Festival. Approximately half of its residents identify Ukranian as the language first learned and still understood. Longford's identity is tied closely to its K-12 school; the Ukranian culture is evident in numerous school activities. Longford School has a tradition of busing high school students to a rural community in the adjoining Ladybank School Division to receive industrial arts instruction and a number of Ladybank's high school students who are in close proximity to Longford are bused to and attend the Longford high school on a full time basis. The two schools travel back and forth for athletic competitions. In addition, a good number of Longford area residents access a major trading center in Ladybank to shop and seek employment; travel in the direction of Turnhill is more limited. These natural patterns of transportation and commerce influenced Longford's decision to seek amalgamation with the Ladybank School Division.

Centrally located within the division, Falkland also provides a full range of services to the town and surrounding area. Nearly half of its residents first learned and still understand a language other than English— namely, Ukranian, Russian/Doukhobor, or French. Recreational and cultural activities play an important role in the community and annual festivals reflect the Ukranian/Russian heritage. The K-12 school offers a full complement of subjects to its students. Students in the Falkland and Spence schools have traditionally traveled to schools within the Turnhill Division for sports activities. Area residents generally travel to the major trading center adjacent to the Turnhill School Division to avail themselves of the amenities offered by an urban center.

The community of Spence provides a variety of services to its residents, albeit on a smaller scale. Its major business is farming, both mixed and grain—wheat, canola, lentils,

and feed grains as well as hog and cattle operations. A variety of activities, both cultural and recreational, provide cohesion to the life of the town although some activities are struggling to continue. While English is by far the major language first learned and still understood, German, Hungarian, French and Metis are also heard within the community and are a reflection of Spence's cultural diversity. The school has a tuition agreement with First Nations Bands to provide grades 10, 11, and 12 to its aboriginal population.

What is common to the communities within the Beaver Flat School Division is the pioneer spirit and ethic of work which made survival possible during early settlement, the Depression years, and the ensuing years of economic growth and recession. Education has always been an important facet of their life and, as a result, the retention of schools within their respective communities and direct representation on Boards of Education has been a priority item. Schools are perceived as one of the lifelines of a community.

In contrast, the Turnhill School Division was and continues to be one of the largest rural school divisions in Saskatchewan. Indicative of their total population, one of the rural municipalities experienced a population change from 1991 to 1996 of only -3.0 percent and during the same period two major towns experienced a growth of 7.4 and 5.0 percent (Statistics Canada, 1998). Consisting of 16 schools in eight subdivisions plus Hutterite colonies and a First Nations reserve, Turnhill has the advantage of being in close proximity to a major trading center. As a result, Turnhill continues to attract a greater share of the rural population as well as industrial and business ventures. Several towns and villages in the area serve as bedroom communities to the major trading center. Employment is varied with opportunities in both the agriculture and business sectors; the taxation base is substantial. Although the division has experienced a decline in student enrolment in outlying areas, generally, enrollments have been stable or increasing. Serving a population of over 4,200 students, Turnhill continues to provide its clientele with a full range of support services.

Cultural diversity abounds in the Turnhill School Division. The outlying areas are more "rural" in nature, while a number of its communities, serving as bedroom communities to the adjoining urban center, could be described to some extent as "cities in the country." Several communities have a large Mennonite component and espouse the traditional values of their faith while other communities display a mixture of Catholic, Mennonite, Ukranian, French, and Metis influences. The Turnhill Division has traditionally served tuition students from a First Nations Reserve and some school populations have a First Nations component which ranges from 20 to 70 per cent. However, this is likely to change as a result of First Nations' initiatives to construct schools within their own communities. All communities provide a variety of cultural and recreational activities although residents of the bedroom communities are more likely to access activities in the urban center.

Aspects of Community

Rural communities are identifiable through a number of distinct characteristics. Nachtigal (1982) suggested that, when compared to urban communities, rural communities generally exhibit the following traits: tightly linked social interactions, frequent personal interactions, people tend to be generalists, non-bureaucratic social structure, verbal communication, self-sufficiency, poorer, smaller in size, and lower population density. Indeed, cultural and economic homogeneity and traditional values tend to be directly related to the degree of remoteness from a major urban center. The reverse is also true, the closer to an urban center, the more cosmopolitan is the rural community (Nachtigal). Evidence of this phenomenon between the communities in Beaver Flat and the communities in Turnhill—those in close proximity to a large urban center, were evident in the study.

Intrinsic to a rural life choice, are five rural educational themes (AEL, 1996, p. 2). A *sense of place* concerns the relationship between local cultures and their environment,

including curriculum and instruction that is based on community endeavors, teaching students the value of the community, and the educational contributions of diverse rural cultures. *Unsettling* pertains to the outmigration that has characterized recent rural experience and its implications on the future, including school consolidation and reorganization; the social and economic effects of school closures on communities; the withdrawal of services and organizations such as hospitals and stores from rural areas; and the revitalization of rural institutions. *Pathways to adulthood* applies to the maturation of children and youth, which is affected by curriculum, vocational opportunities, development of a vibrant sense of community, and outmigration. *Small-scale organization* characterizes rural education, institutions, and businesses and relates to student performance and accomplishment, size and idea of community, various systems designed to respect people, helping small schools realize the advantages of "smallness," and different ways of organizing school children. Finally, *policy challenges* may involve any of the above themes as they apply to the role of policy in facilitating or frustrating rural interests, regional policy variations, adopting a flexible curriculum which meets educational requirements, and rural public policy education.

Working in partnership, schools, families, and communities "can improve school programs and school climate, provide family services and support, increase parents' skills and leadership, connect families with others in the school and community, and help teachers with their work" (Epstein, 1997, p. 255). Furthermore, rural schools, working in partnership with local leaders and residents, can have a positive impact on community viability. When students have opportunities to engage in "meaningful community-based learning...the community helps to develop responsible citizens for today and skilled leaders for tomorrow" (Miller, 1996, p. 3). In other words, by working together, families, schools and communities can create caring educational environments which sustain rural life. This is not a new concept for rural communities; indeed, the family/school/community connection lies at the very heart of rural life in Saskatchewan. Through school division

amalgamation the real or perceived loss of this aspect of caring communities which are closely involved in the education of their children frequently results in resistance to change. A resurgence of interest in the concept of "community schools" attests to the value of caring communities and their effect on student success.

School divisions are represented by many communities and every individual is a member of many communities. For example, Sergiovanni (1996) suggested that the family can be considered a moral nurturing community, that churches function as spiritual communities, and that clubs function as friendship communities. In a like manner, schools function as learning communities (Braun, 1996). Furthermore, within the educational community, we find a number of sub-communities—families, parents, students, teachers, administrators, school jurisdictions, special committees, and so on. "In rural areas, the business community, farming community and town communities may have a significant impact on the school community" (Phillips, 1997). Building a shared history provides the mechanism through which divergent communities come to understand the constraints, language, and logic of other communities and individuals (Dempsey & McCadden, 1997). With this in mind, a community perspective at the school division level implies that understanding the multiple communities individuals are a part of will serve to enhance our ability to understand people and to build the larger community resulting from a school division amalgamation.

In summary, issues of the rural circumstance include senses of and attachment to rural places, the relationship between school and community sustainability, proper aims for an education committed to rural community, rural pathways to rural adulthood, community engagement in rural schools, rural community and educational stewardship, curricula to sustain rural places, and small-scale organization in rural schooling and community (Howley & Harmon, 1996, pp. 8-9). In other words, because many community activities and functions revolve around schools and the children who attend theses schools, schools are frequently viewed as the focal point of small communities. With this in mind,

communities are concerned over the effects of school division amalgamation on the existence and continued viability of small communities and their schools. Furthermore, direct representation on the Board of Education is often equated, in rural communities, to control over the education of their children and a preservation of the community's identity. In rural communities, schools are everybody's business.

Conclusion

It is within this context of educational governance restructuring and rural change that the researcher set out to explore the management of a school division amalgamation process. Field research extended over a period of one year and participants welcomed the opportunity to give voice to their experiences. Their stories served to develop a vocal tapestry which described the interweaving of the political, technical and cultural strands of their journey of change.

It is to these stories that we now turn. The next chapter provides a description of the amalgamation process and the management of that process through the lenses of those who participated in the event. Although, in the final analysis, it is the story of *one* amalgamation, each participant has contributed her/his own perspective of the amalgamation initiative.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH DATA

Chapter 5 presents an analysis and description of the data collected for this study. Primary data for the study was gathered through interviews with participants from identified stakeholder groups: Boards of Education, Directors, school trustees, ratepayers, parents, central office staff, support staff, principals, teachers, and students. Documentary evidence included amalgamation binders, minutes of meetings, correspondence between the divisions and the Department of Education, and media news releases. Additionally, the researcher's on-site observation of meetings by the boards, the Amalgamation Steering Committee (ASC), and local and joint teacher associations supplemented and supported the interview data. Using the information collected and analysed from the above sources, Chapter 5 addresses the research questions. As discussed in Chapter 3, interviews will be identified by role, school division, interview, and page number (see Appendix B for a description of the identification code). Notwithstanding the excessive use of quotes, the researcher believes that in order to understand the story of amalgamation and the meanings attributed to it by those who lived through the process, we need to *hear their voice*. The following "thick" description of the amalgamation process and how it was managed, it is hoped, will accomplish that end.

Question 1

Why did amalgamation become an issue in the school divisions?

Without exception, Beaver Flat stakeholders realized there was a pressing need to address the issue of governance restructuring. Beginning as early as 1991, discussions with a variety of adjoining school divisions; a previous amalgamation study; and the realization their division was facing serious challenges, both financial and in the

maintenance of core programming, had resulted in a general consensus. In order for schools to remain viable and within their communities, the problem demanded attention. School enrollment had dropped from a high of 2500 students to just over 600. Having already experienced school closures, declining enrollments due to a decline in the rural population as well as a recent decision by a First Nations Reserve to start their own school, declines in funding grants, central office administrative cuts, teacher reductions, and the loss of a guidance counselor, the Beaver Flat Division had three possible options: further centralization, maintaining the status quo, or amalgamation. Given that centralization had already occurred and maintaining the status quo would solve nothing as well as requiring a mill rate increase of at least 10 mills, pursuing amalgamation was deemed as the only possible solution. As is the case in any highly emotional issue, viewpoints varied and individuals voiced both support and resistance to change:

> It always seems like maybe we can wait another year or whatever, but then, when we looked at it, the longer you prolonged it, the agony was still going to be there, so we figured we better get it over with. (B-BFL: 11, p. 2)[2]

> I had a serious concern and had shared it in a number of different venues, that we are in danger in this province of developing a two-tiered system of education, without people really understanding it. I mean, I know that kids in a school system with a part-time director and no other support staff can't possibly have the same opportunities in the long run as kids in school divisions where they've got the special help. And I said to the board, "If you don't make the decision and if your parents don't make the decision, the kids will, because they're smart enough to realize that when they get out of grade 12, they want to be on a level playing field with the kids coming out of [the city schools]." And they have a right to that. (D-BF: 17, p. 21)

---

[2] Interviews are identified by role, school division, interview, and page number. Thus, (B-BFL: 11, p. 2) reads as Board member-Beaver Flat Longford: Interview 11, page 2. See Appendix B for an explanation of the codes.

The First Nations viewpoint concurred with the general opinion that the students of the Beaver Flat School Division should have access to the same support services available to students in other locations:

> I made sure our own educational authority received the information as I received it. But I think the feeling was, it's not going to really affect us, and if it does, it is going to be a good effect. There'll be support services for our children and that was one of the main thrusts that we were certainly looking for, making sure that the children got the best. Programing was already there and we had good programing, we were not sub-standard, but certainly support for the students was at a level which could see some improvement. (B-BF: 8, pp. 2-3)

In summary, amalgamation for the Beaver Flat School Division was primarily enrollment driven. Declining enrollments and the resulting cuts in foundation grants had placed in jeopardy the division's ability to keep schools open, sustain programs and academic standards, and provide services to students and teachers. In addition, given the government's position on governance restructuring, the Beaver Flat School Division, comprised of some 600 students, was searching for an amalgamation partner.

In sharp contrast, the need to amalgamate was *not* an issue for the Turnhill School Division. Turnhill was already large enough to provide a full range of services to its students and teachers. In the enviable position of *not having* to look at further consolidation in the near future, an increase of some 600 students would continue to consolidate SV's "safe" position as well as comply with the provincial initiative to amalgamate.

> I guess it was part of the whole restructuring process that the province is moving toward. Really, I don't think our board saw it as an issue. It came from Beaver Flat and they were looking, rather, they approached our board to talk about the possibility, so that's how the whole process came about....For the most part, those services [special education, counseling, and program support] were non-existent, and now they have access to all of those kinds of resources that they were lacking before. That's part of the reason they recognized the need to move to a bigger resource base....The direct

> services to children is what's important and certainly, we've been able to provide that. (ST-T: 2, pp. 1, 17)

> It was interesting because at the public meeting in Falkland in February, different people got up and asked, "Why are you doing this?" The bottom line has always been to serve the needs of the children, whether they're yours or whose ever...Finally, one guy got up and said, "Why do you guys even want to do this? There's nothing in it for you." And from our perspective, it wasn't an issue of what was in it for us. It was what we could offer the children [from Beaver Flat] and that was a key point. (ST-T: 2, p. 8)

These quotations demonstrate that Turnhill did not seek but was approached to consider amalgamation discussions. Given their secure situation, Turnhill considered the amalgamation request from the perspective of having a responsibility to provide children with a good education, both as a school division and on a global level (Int. 172, p. 8).

> I think that of all the things I really appreciated about the Turnhill people was that they took the position that it wasn't "our kids and your kids", but rather, these are kids who require services. Provincial kids if you like, all of them, whether they happened to be on one side of the river or the other. (D-BF: 1, pp. 6-7)

> That is not to say, that the communities in Turnhill were all in favor of the amalgamation. At public meetings in Turnhill, concerns were raised regarding the effect of serving more students and schools with no increase, but rather a decrease in central office staff. Credit needs to be given to Turnhill because what were they gaining? I mean, what did they have to win from this? One could argue nothing. Simply a duty to look after the best interests of the students of the province and to take on more kids to do that. That's pretty admirable. I give them a lot of credit for keeping [the Turnhill people] on that track. Because there were certainly opportunities, and particularly at one of the community meetings I attended, where the...community was quite prepared to challenge what was in it for us and the Director and Board Chair remained stating their position. (D-T: 14, p. 5)

Therefore, on the one hand, amalgamation became an issue for the Beaver Flat School Division because the division no longer had either sufficient student numbers or a large enough tax base to provide the needed or mandated services to students in their

schools. On the other hand, because Turnhill was large enough to provide their students and teachers with a full range of services, amalgamation became an issue for them only after they were approached by the Beaver Flat Division to consider the amalgamation of the two divisions. It was under these circumstances that the process of amalgamation began to unfold.

Question 2

How did the process of amalgamation unfold?

The process of amalgamation unfolded on numerous fronts, at different times, and in a variety of settings. Furthermore, the perception of what happened depended upon the lens or perspective through which one was viewing the process as well as the role in which individuals found themselves, either as a parent, a ratepayer, a teacher, a student, a trustee, a board member, a director, or a combination of any of the above. The process was, for the most part, collaborative and, as such, called for a tremendous expenditure of time and energy from diverse groups of individuals.

> The process we're in right now puts a tremendous responsibility on people to work together and the responsibility for people to find their own solutions. For people to work hard at consensus decision-making and involvement, that's painful, requires lots of time, lots of human resources, lots of energy. But, in the final analysis, it [collaborative decision-making] is on the positive side, allows for a good deal of participation if it is going to be accomplished. And in that, significant ownership. (F: 6, p. 5)

In order to view and understand the process, to see the "big picture," the researcher developed a chronology of amalgamation events (see Appendix F). The chronology depicts events as they occurred within the Beaver Flat School Division, the Turnhill School Division, and between the two divisions. Also, because the amalgamation involved a splitting of the Beaver Flat Division, Longford subdivision joining the Ladybank School Division and Falkland and Spence becoming part of the Turnhill School Division, selected meetings and communications with the Ladybank School Division have

been included. The amalgamation process, as described herein between Beaver Flat and Turnhill, was mirrored by similar activities between the Beaver Flat Board representing the Longford subdivision and the Ladybank School Division. The Ladybank/Longford amalgamation will be referred to only to the extent that it influenced or was influenced by the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation.

The Beaver Flat School Division had commenced addressing the challenges facing them in the early 1990s. This effort resulted in the centralization of schools and administrative services, amalgamation explorations with surrounding school divisions, and a study of one amalgamation possibility. Issues of concern throughout these years included considerations as to division and school size, the infrastructures or services available to students, the desire for some permanence in the future, travel patterns, the location of schools and the Board office, and travel distances for students. In 1994, the Beaver Flat Board determined to further pursue the option of amalgamation and, the current director having retired, advertised for a .6 Director to oversee the operation of the division *and* the amalgamation of the Beaver Flat School Division with another jurisdiction.

In the fall of 1994, the Beaver Flat Board held meetings in all three subdivisions in order to inform their public with regard to three possible choices of action: maintaining the status quo, centralization, and amalgamation. Maintaining the status quo, with a projected tax increase of 10 to12 mills was, for most of the ratepayers, an unpopular option. Accompanying this option was the reality of continuing with both a .6 Director and Secretary-Treasurer and no improvement in services to support pupil and teacher needs. As for further centralization, the consensus in each of the three subdivisions was, "OK, as long as the school is in our community." Obviously, further centralization and consolidation of schools and services was not an answer to the problem. The meetings concluded with a consensus decision by all three communities as well as the Board of Education, namely, a decision to further explore the third option of amalgamation.

Subsequent to the fall meetings, the Beaver Flat Board contacted and received information packages from the surrounding school divisions. Their reception, in all cases, was cordial. Each of the divisions expressed interest in the process and indicated a commitment to provide the Beaver Flat Board with a full disclosure of information as to their respective divisions. Upon completing an analysis of the information, the majority of the Beaver Flat Board concluded the most desirable course of action was to pursue amalgamation with the Turnhill School Division.

> I think that probably the most important point was when the board arrived at a consensus about what made the most sense from their point of view. Some of that came from what people said directly like, "We should be joining Turnhill," and part of it because I could sense that there was an affinity there. (SS-BF: 17, p. 11)

Community meetings to share the findings of the Board were conducted in the spring of 1995. The general public indicated they were in support of amalgamation with the Turnhill School Division. However, the reaction of the subdivision of Longford was not as supportive. As early as 1993, Longford had indicated the possibility of a preference to join the Ladybank School Division. Initially, the Beaver Flat Board insisted all three subdivisions should move in the same direction; this was the majority vote. However, after a number of meetings, local surveys in Longford, communications from both the town of Longford and the local municipality, and discussions with the Minister of Education, the Beaver Flat Board reversed its decision and approached the Ladybank School Division with the intent to explore the amalgamation of the Longford subdivision to the Ladybank School Division. Although the issue was resolved, it was not without rancor.

From that point in time, the amalgamation process continued between the Beaver Flat subdivisions of Falkland and Spence with the Turnhill School Division. A similar process occurred between Longford subdivision and the Ladybank School Division. It is important to note that, while working through the "amalgamation process," the respective

Boards passed motions indicating a commitment to the process of amalgamation while retaining the option to withdraw from discussions at any time, if so desired.

Early in 1996, public information meetings on the proposed amalgamation were conducted in both the Beaver Flat and Turnhill School Divisions. An Amalgamation Steering Committee (ASC), which included representation from various groups from each division, met on a regular basis (see Appendix G for a description of the ASC). Rather than being appointed by the Boards, the ASC representatives were chosen by the membership of their own groups. As a result, the ASC was viewed as having a high degree of credibility. This is reflected in the comment of a research participant (Int. *, p. 7): "They didn't cherry pick, and say, 'Oh, you're a nice teacher and you'll be on our side.' They said, 'Local association, please appoint.' " The mandate of the ASC was to receive input, presentations, and possible solutions to issues from the ASC members who represented the various groups; to discuss these and other issues; and to make recommendations to the Boards. The Boards took the recommendations under advisement and, after further consideration of the issues, made decisions and passed motions.

Discussions during the course of ASC meetings resulted in the writing and acceptance of a key document outlining the principles of amalgamation. The development of the document was an ongoing endeavor throughout the process of amalgamation. The end result, the *Principles of Amalgamation*, served to guide the amalgamation process (see Appendix H). The document's value lay in the fact that it established the parameters within which the amalgamation process would transpire. The opening statement— that the central purpose of the amalgamation was to provide the best educational services to all students, set the tone for any subsequent actions or decisions. The development of the *Principles of Amalgamation* was a key component of the amalgamation process:

> One of the key components of the process is [that through consultation and discussion] we agreed on the principles of amalgamation; that became important because it provided a focus for everybody: this is why we are doing this. And I think it's important that that not be lost sight of. [Agreement on

> the principles] came part way through the process and, actually, it was at that point that we wrote to the Minister for the first time and said the boards have agreed now to these principles of amalgamation. We're going to work through these principles and we will soon be coming back to you asking for an order.(D-BF: 17, pp. 30)

The document then proceeded to identify the Beaver Flat sub-divisions, Falkland and Spence, which were being amalgamated with the "existing" Turnhill School Division. Board representation on the "new" Board of Education, subdivision boundaries, tuition agreements between each of the First Nations and the Board, the actual date of amalgamation, and by-elections for Board members from the newly added subdivisions were clarified. The last three principles dealt with the pre-merger collaboration of the two Boards in making decisions that would effect the future operations of the amalgamated district, the commitment to on-going involvement and two-way communication in the resolution of outstanding issues with the groups involved in the process, and a recognition that every effort would be made to ensure that employees of the new system were all part of the new Turnhill team.

The ASC also developed an action plan (see Appendix I). The plan identified actions to be taken, by whom, and when. In addition, ASC committee representatives, appointed by their own members, acted as a liaison between their groups and the ASC.

At the same time, the individual Boards of Education continued to meet as did groups such as trustees, teachers, and support staff, either within their own division or as a combined entity. Regional Directors and Department of Education officials offered information and advice as needed and the Minister of Education assisted in the resolution of issues of representation on the Board for a First Nations group, the grandfathering of local teacher agreements, and the Longford situation.

Regular communication with the public transpired through the sharing of information by Board members, school trustees, and ASC members. Memorandums to the employees as well as meetings with in-school administrators served to inform the

divisions' employees. The Turnhill Secretary-Treasurer coordinated all media releases. From as early as the fall of 1995, joint planning took place between the two divisions particularly with respect to staffing, budgetary decisions, and representation on teacher committees. Time became a factor; the anticipated date for amalgamation of September 1, 1996, was moved to January 1, 1997. At that time, all necessary conditions including the division of assets and liabilities having been met, the Minister passed an order for the dissolution of the Beaver Flat School Division. Pursuant to that motion, the subdivisions of Falkland and Spence amalgamated with the Turnhill School Division and the subdivision of Longford became part of the Ladybank School Division. Comments regarding the amalgamation process included the following:

> I think it was very key that the Directors cooperated. They didn't use an outside facilitator....I would reinforce the idea that the process used by Turnhill and Beaver Flat was one that can be repeated by other Boards because they used a process that was very much inclusionary. Everybody ended up feeling they were stakeholders and that was certainly valuable. I think you have to be reasonably careful not to get caught up in the details....It's a bit like a marriage, at some point if you decide to do it, do it. Then you can work out the wrinkles because if you wait for everything to be perfect, you're never going to do it....I think you also have to understand individual community interests and be sensitive to them. (R-T: 3, p. 8)

> Having been through [several] amalgamations, there are things that I've come up with. There is a great deal of concern, among teachers particularly, about amalgamation and the affect that it's going to have on their working life and their situation....Secondly, there's a concern about change, that there's going to be something radically different and I don't think it is....Amalgamation to me is change. It's not a grieving process, it's not divorce; it's not unpleasant, it's not unhappy. It's just a change. Obviously, there are some good things to it and some negative things....The third point is that people have got to accept the fact that change is inevitable. Amalgamation will occur and if we don't choose our partners that will be decided for us. And my feeling is, it's better the devil you know than the devil you don't..Well, at least this way, you have some input as to how the amalgamation proceeds....My fourth point is that the more people you get involved in the amalgamation process the better....I guess a board's perception is they are doing that. That's their perception. It's not a

> perception that's widely held....I think the Turnhill model, if you could use that term, is probably the best that I've seen. (E-BFL: 10, pp. 10-11)

In view of the preceding quotations, it is evident individuals appreciated the opportunity to be involved in the amalgamation process. It was also important for the stakeholders to have input into the decisions to amalgamate and with whom, as well as the determination of and participation in the amalgamation process. Community meetings provided a venue for public participation, discussion, and the sharing of information. Furthermore, as the process unfolded, the need to listen to, appreciate, understand and respond to the concerns of diverse groups and individuals was clearly indicated. Collaborative problem solving was the primary method used to address and resolve issues and cooperation between the two divisions, as modeled by both the Boards and the Directors, was instrumental in maintaining a positive attitude throughout the amalgamation process.

Question 3

What were the critical incidents in the amalgamation process?

Although the collaborative amalgamation process generally moved forward in a smooth manner, it was not without the occasional "hiccup" or critical incident. Once again, what was seen as a critical incident was colored by the perspective of individuals and/or interest groups, their role in the amalgamation process, and what was at stake for them. Furthermore, what was perceived as "critical" changed as the divisions moved through the various stages of the process. Participants in the study equated "critical incidents" to how things were done and to how issues were resolved. The analysis of critical incidents as reported by the participants resulted in a categorization of incidents: incidents having to do with the process itself and issues requiring resolution.

Having determined the two critical incident areas as process and the resolution of issues, the question became one of deciding the order of discussion. Did the process inform and determine how issues were resolved or did the issues determine what processes

were used during the amalgamation of the two divisions? Although the nature of the various issues did impact on the processes used, generally, the process as evidenced by public consultation and input from the ASC members largely prescribed how issues were resolved. For this reason, critical "process" incidents will be discussed first.

Critical Incidents: Process

Participants in the case study identified inclusion through communication and consultation, leadership, timing, personnel, support from the Department of Education and the Regional Office, and mechanisms for the resolution of disputes as issues critical to the amalgamation process.

Inclusion

Inclusion throughout the amalgamation process was an issue of importance to all participants. To them, inclusion embraced the elements of communication and consultation.

Communication. The who, why, what, when, and how of communication was identified by all research participants as critical to the amalgamation process: *Who?* Without exception, all participants indicated the need for open communication between the public, the boards, and the ASC. *Why?* All stakeholders wanted to know what was happening and why, particularly when the event under discussion was likely to have a considerable impact upon their lives, either individually or as part of a community—be it school, special interest, or town. *What?* In short, everything. Participants acknowledged the necessity for the dissemination of accurate and complete information, both as to the process itself and to the resolution of issues under discussion. *When?* The research participants indicated that communication was needed throughout the entirety of the amalgamation process, from the earliest of discussions, to the actual date of amalgamation, to after the fact. *How?* Participants reviewed the variety of methods

employed to disseminate information: public meetings; meetings with special interest groups such as trustees or school division staff; contact with in-school administrators; news releases through the media—local newspapers, radio, and television; school newsletters; and mail drops. Additional ways of dispersing information included: ASC members sharing information with their respective groups or the general public; the sharing of information by Board members and school trustees; memorandums to and meetings with division employees; and by word of mouth—coffee time at the local café.

Although information was disseminated in a variety of ways, opinions varied with regard to the effectiveness and timeliness of information dispersal:

> When we had community meetings we didn't rely on notes going home from the school, we did mail drops so that information went in every mail box within the school division. And that was important because, as you know, we've only got about 30 percent of the folks out there paying the bill who have kids in school....The whole community knew we had a meeting and if they chose not to come, well, that was fine. (D-BF:1, pp.5-6)

> As soon as something starts to happen, then the process has to be opened wide up, and I think we did that fairly well here. And there can't be any secret meetings, there can't be anybody making decisions without everybody else being aware...I guess that's the only thing that is crucial, if they're thinking about doing it, get everybody that's involved and get them involved, all the information shared. (E-T: 5, p.8)

> There were good communications from the committee to the board back to the local people; they were not outside the circle; and [the Board] used all the available avenues. (R-T: 3, p. 7)

However, although mail drops were used to inform all community residents of public meetings and although efforts were made to inform individuals with regard to meetings and decisions, some individuals expressed dissatisfaction over communication efforts.

> When Longford decided we wanted to go to [Ladybank], they [the Boards] never said much, but there was a change. After that, basically, there was no more communication....Yes, our rep [on the ASC] kept sitting in on those meeting,...but whenever something was brought up about Ladybank, the feeling was that the discussions had nothing to do with us....Even as a whole board [Beaver Flat], we found out there were some meetings with [the

> directors] that actually never came back to the Beaver Flat Board....Sometimes we'd see a news release in the paper...which we didn't even know about and we did bring it up...Don't you think the board, at least the chairman, should be notified before something is said to the press? At that point it just seemed like [the Director] wanted to get the amalgamation worked through. (B-BFL: 21, p. 11)

It is apparent that, depending on one's perspective, views as to the efficacy of communication throughout the amalgamation process varied. Beaver Flat residents, barring some from the subdivision of Longford, were generally satisfied, notwithstanding that a number of employees commented on the need for more intra school information. The Turnhill contingent was, for the most part, satisfied with the level and quality of communication. By the same token, both divisions found the community meetings to be a most satisfactory means of sharing information and responding to the concerns of their electorate.

Consultation. Participants' perceptions as to the degree of consultation and discussion were closely tied to their views on the kind and degree of communication which occurred during the amalgamation process. Sharing information, talking with people, providing a forum for open discussion at public meetings, and the composition of the ASC served to provide those who wanted to be involved with the opportunity to do so.

> The public meetings that we had, if you have too many, people get bored and tired of the whole issue, but if you have enough, then people have the opportunity to come and be informed or ask their questions and express their concerns and we probably did that just enough....But overall, everybody can be involved that needs to or wants to be involved in this process. Focus on the kids and try and remove our personal agenda from the larger decision-making process. And when the whole thing comes down, people have to be involved and it has to be a people focused operation. (D-T: 14, pp. 1, 14)

However, not all groups who might have wished to sit in on the amalgamation deliberations were allowed to do so. This was the case for both the Saskatchewan School

Trustees Association (SSTA) and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF). These respective organizations, although not directly involved, were available to offer support and counsel.

The question, "Who actually makes the decision to amalgamate and with who?" was raised by various individuals throughout the Beaver Flat Division. Assumptions were made that, upon the completion of public meetings, the public would be able to vote. Although the communities were generally in agreement with the Board's decision to amalgamate, there was considerable dismay when people realized that a public vote would not be held on the amalgamation question.

Leadership

Providing leadership throughout an amalgamation process is a complicated task. And, once again, satisfaction with the leadership provided throughout the amalgamation of the Beaver Flat and Turnhill Divisions depended very much upon the experiences of each individual. On a provincial level, leadership was provided to the extent that was needed, namely, in the clarification of legal process and the amalgamation sequence. The Minister, on request, assisted in the resolution of legislated issues. On a local level, leadership was largely provided by the Directors and Secretary-Treasurers of both school divisions. Actions taken were under advisement from the ASC and motions as passed by the Boards of Education. Two perspectives on leadership emerged during the analysis of the data, one being that of the leader and, the other, that of the recipients of the said leadership.

Participants valued the following qualities in the leaders of the amalgamation process: collaborative, trustworthy, honest, open to ideas, fair, and not self-serving. That these qualitites had been generally perceived as being displayed by their leaders was apparent through the general satisfaction with the amalgamation process:

> [Turnhill's] central office shows and practices an attitude of caring. The Director not only can talk the talk, but he can walk the talk. It's like geese

> flying in a "V", there is a need for a leader to direct the change, but sometimes others need to be supportive and can lead in their own area. The experience has been great. The Director always includes and greets you; the amalgamation has been a positive thing. We've had super service from the Director though he is very overworked. I'm looking for more good things coming and continuing as a result of the amalgamation. (E-BF: 19, p. 3)

> [As for moving the amalgamation process forward] I don't think there was anyone in particular, other than the Directors took the approach that the amalgamation was going to move forward and kept working that way. We met as a steering committee and when we got [back] to our individual boards it was more like, "OK, we're at this point, do we still want to continue?" And that question came up every two weeks...and I kept at that question. I said, "You're going to hear it every time because if, for any reason we decide not to, then we've got to have the reasons why and do it [withdraw from the amalgamation]." So the momentum just kept carrying itself and as things were being resolved, it looked as though it was going to be an all right situation....So there wasn't really anyone pushing it, other than the directors themselves were pushing the *progress* of it from an administrative standpoint to get things done. (B-T: 4, p.6)

However, there were exceptions to the above position, specifically when dealing with contentious issues such as the division of assets and liabilities:

> So then they said, "We will give you a little better deal on buses," to give us a newer bus here. But they also gave us some of the older ones....Well, the committee from Turnhill went to a Board meeting at Ladybank. And it kind of made us feel like, "Hey, we don't count here?" We are shutting down [as a division], but it made us feel unimportant....So they divided our assets without us. (B-BFL: 11, pp. 10-11)

By the same token, the individuals leading the amalgamation process were cognizant of leadership attributes and effects. The Directors realized they were walking a tight line when it came to the collaborative process while, at the same time, monitoring the amalgamation process; maintaining its momentum; and responding with sensitivity to individuals, interest groups, and communities dealing with change.

> We had to be careful that we didn't become so directive that we took away the decision-making from the boards. And there were times when I think

> board members felt that was happening. But you can't move through such a complicated change without having sort of thought through what has to happen for it to occur....You don't have to be a rocket scientist to realize what the issues are going to be....Being able to sit down or pick up the phone and talk with the other Director or Secretary-Treasurers, working things through- and that upset the board, they felt that there were decisions being made about the division of assets and liabilities before they had had an opportunity to consider it. And they were getting pretty sensitive about that. There had been a lot of discussion about what made sense and what kinds of things to recommend to the boards, but the final decisions were going to rest with the boards. (D-BF: 1, pp. 12-13)

> We kept saying, and I kept telling the Board, the decisions are going to be tough and in the final analysis, what you've got to do is put kids first. Whatever decision you make, be convinced in your own mind it's in the best interest of the kids. I said if you do that, regardless of what else happens, you're going to be able to live with it. Because, after all, you've been elected to be trustees for kids. (D-BF: 1, p. 5)

> We keep focused on kids and we try and keep our personal agendas separate from this....You really need people at the helm of the process who are people focused...and strong process people. Everything can go smoothly if you think about the steps ahead, and you're reflective. You look at what you've done and, I suppose, how you can fix it if it goes wrong. (D-T: 14, p. 17)

The Directors, as portrayed by the preceding comments, were conscious of the need to both look ahead in order to anticipate what was still to come as well as the need to step back and reflect on what had already transpired.

Leadership was also provided by the Board members within each of the respective divisions. Sharing information with local trustees, carrying their concerns to the ASC, and being available to their public were important elements of their position as community leaders.

> I think the board members were influential and opinion setters in many ways. Let's take the two representatives from Beaver Flat, had they been diabolically opposed and had gone back to their local board and said, "This is a crazy idea, we should never do it," that decision probably would have held

> the day, you know. But they were open and willing to see what the benefits could be. (D-BF: 1, pp. 20-21)

Indeed, each member of the ASC had a leadership role to play with respect to the interest group they represented.

The provincial government's position throughout the amalgamation process was one of support and assistance in the resolution of issues as requested. Both Boards were very appreciative of this support. However, through the course of interviews, participants also addressed the issue of leadership by the Department of Education.

> From a provincial perspective and leadership, we did get a tremendous amount of support from the department in our meetings and the discussions we had. They were always there lending support and moving the process along in whatever way that they could to help the situation. We're very grateful to the department for that. On the provincial perspective of amalgamation,...I know a number of boards [throughout the province] are struggling with amalgamation because there isn't a specific game plan out there. And so [the Department] is just throwing it out for everybody to do their own thing. I think from some perspectives, that's good. It gives the boards the encouragement to explore and seek out new directions in terms of how they might do things better. But, on the other hand, there's always the fear that some poor, unsuspecting, unwitting souls are going to get left out in the cold in the process, because they don't take the initiative that's necessary to be included somewhere. Eventually, there's going to be some odd man out. And that is not good for school systems, not good for the children in particular, and certainly not good for education on the whole. I guess those issues will eventually be resolved as well, but they shouldn't be there in the first place. So I think it would be good if the Department had some additional kind of leadership plan in its back pocket and something to guide the process. I think they are working on it but I think that should have come first. I think the timing isn't right, that should have come first. (ST-*, pp. 13-14)

> If there were greater guidelines, more guidelines, more specificity to it, to what is wanted, it would help....I advocated the department to do much more in terms of drawing a map, or at least setting out some pretty considerable guidelines and then having the public respond to that. On a political government level the decision was made to go differently. It really leaves regional directors to try and convince people to go somewhere. (R-T: 3, p.10)

> I guess it's a case of non-leadership...it's a *knowing non-leadership*. Like it's a messy issue and we can look at the Health Boards and the way they were set up. You know, we want you to do this, we aren't going to give you any guidelines to do it, you go ahead and do it, and then we don't have to take the heat for it.....Maybe ten years down the line, we may look back and say, "Yes, that was a smart move by this government," but at the present time it's saying, "Well, there are no guidelines out there, no structures." The government has seen that [teacher's contractual agreements with existing boards] is going to be an issue and they said, "OK, we will put something in place for that. The rest of it, you handle that stuff over there, we don't want to get involved in your messy little politics, it might cost me my seat in the next election." That's maybe cynical, but that's kind of the way I read what's happening and maybe it's a good approach. It leaves the people that have to live with the decisions to make the decisions. There are no scapegoats left. You can't say the government said we have to do this, we have to do that. We made that decision and we have to live with it. (E-BF: 9, pp. 13-14)

> I think that [voluntary amalgamation] is very risky. It's OK for those who get started early, but eventually you get to a point where you've got a poor cousin somewhere that is really not attractive to anybody, then what do you do? So I really think that an approach should be taken by the government that doesn't have to be a big hammer, maybe it should be a facilitating approach, but with some very definite ideas about time lines that need to be met. And have people available that can come in and help if needed....I think the [provincial government] should be more pro-active and they should do the same thing with the rural municipalities. School division boundaries are 50 years old; certainly that applies to rural municipality boundaries that are 100 years old or darn close to it. Another thing that ties into that, and it's just an off-the-cuff remark, but with regard to Health Boards. I mean [the government] got burned and so backed away just when they really shouldn't have. (D-BF: 1, pp. 28-29)

The preceding comments indicate, on one hand, a high degree of satisfaction with regard to the support and assistance received from the Department of Education during the amalgamation process. On the other hand, the comments reflect a general attitude of cynicism toward government decisions, particularly in view of the fact that many of their decisions are perceived as being politically motivated. Numerous individuals would like the government to take a more proactive approach to the issue of school division amalgamation, regardless of re-election concerns.

Timing

Timing became an issue on several fronts. Despite the fact that the Beaver Flat School Division had initiated discussion regarding governance restructuring in the early 1990s, a number of individuals, particularly those within the Longford community, believed they could have used more time to consider and investigate the various amalgamation alternatives. Time was also an issue throughout the duration of the process. When it became apparent more time was needed to deal with amalgamation issues, the amalgamation occurred four months later than originally planned.

Furthermore, the .6 time allocated to being the Director of Beaver Flat School Division was not adequate to deal with both amalgamation and school administration responsibilities. This opinion was expressed by numerous individuals: a Regional Director, both Directors of Education, and the Beaver Flat Board of Education, their in-school administrators and teachers.

> The Regional Director had encouraged the board...to hire a full time [director] and I think in some respects he may have seen this as an important point....Everybody was aware that [the Director's] initial reason for being there was to provide for the amalgamation, to get it done....I think in some respects other things suffered, such as teacher supervision. (D-BF: 1, p. 14)

Having inadequate time for personnel to both administer the Beaver Flat School division *and* deal with the amalgamation process placed additional stress on both school principals and teachers:

> The amalgamation aspect was so overwhelming. We were very fortunate in that we had, for the most part, good school administrators and they were prepared to take hold and do things that they might not otherwise have done" (E-BFL: 10, p. 4).

Even though Turnhill operated with a full-time director and employed numerous support staff, a similar opinion was voiced:

> It's critical to have the time to sit back and reflect. It gets very busy. So, if you're going into an amalgamation and you've got two different directors and two boards, through that process, don't understaff yourself. It almost takes a person just to keep their mind on the process. (D-T: 14, p. 11)

Time to adjust to change was cited as an issue by Beaver Flat Board members and teachers and by the Director and Board of Turnhill: "Board members [from Beaver Flat] sometimes wanted to back off, to have more time to grasp with decision and change," (Int. 175, p. 3). Teachers, support staff, directors and board members in both divisions addressed the issue of needing time to adjust to new and different ways of doing things in the "new" division:

> It's like, I suppose, if you moved in with a new family, you have to get to know the history and the norms of that new family. Yes, obviously it's going to take a year or two to work through that. It's an ongoing thing," (D-BF: 1, p. 26).

Pacing the amalgamation process, keeping track of what was done and what still needed to be addressed and, at the same time, maintaining the momentum played an important role in the timing of the process:

> Every once in a while [the Directors] would have to go through a checklist and say, 'Now what have we agreed to? What have we still got left?' And that became more evident as we got closer to the end...so that at the end of the day every board had passed the same motions...and that's what formed the basis of what went to the minister. (D-BF: 1, p. 22)

Timing, an issue of great importance, affected the amalgamation process in a variety of ways. Concerns over having adequate time to investigate issues and to consider alternative courses of action were particularly evident in the Longford subdivision. The collaborative problem solving approach was, in itself, a time consuming process. In addition, the need to keep moving through the amalgamation process involved time

constraints. Finally, individuals needed time to deal with change and to work through the transition process on a personal level.

Personnel

In order to carry out the work involved in an amalgamation process, participants indicated it is imperative there be adequate personnel to oversee the entire amalgamation process and to initiate necessary activities such as the gathering and analysis of information; organizing public meetings; dealing with the media; disseminating information to interest groups, schools, and employees; planning for disestablishment activities and so on. In addition, there was a need for adequate personnel to carry out the "regular" administrative duties which occur within a school division. Hiring a .6 Director in the Beaver Flat School Division was, according to most individuals interviewed, an error. The majority of the director's time was spent dealing with amalgamation issues and, as a result, the everyday running of the division suffered, particularly as far as maintaining conformity throughout the system was concerned. In-school administrators became, in a sense, mini-directors in their own school. As with many of the issues, opinions differed:

> Yes, the major mandate was to go in there and to facilitate amalgamation. In retrospect, I think one of the things that should have happened was that there should have been someone else hired also on a part time basis to look after some of the things within the internal workings of the school division. (D-BF: 1, p.1)

> One of the things in hindsight is that I didn't realize what we'd done to the leadership in our schools by cutting back our directorship. It must have been hell for them. Everyone of those schools went through a change of leadership. Everyone of them. And I think there were expanded responsibilities they weren't prepared for and I don't think they should have been expected to do this. They were already maxed out, trying to do with limited resources. Can you imagine the staffing cuts that had gone on even before we did something at the top? So I think the stress level was unbelievably high. (B-BF: 8, p. 13)

> I don't think that's quite an accurate statement [that amalgamation consumed most of the .6 directorship] because in the Turnhill/Beaver Flat process we have a full time Director and a .6 Director, so it's 1.6. The decisions that were

> being made were made not just by one but by everyone....Curriculum initiatives are carried out by teachers in the school. I don't think the director has really much of a role to play in that. I don't think there was a significant decrease or increase in terms of the level of service we received from our director. It was pretty much business as usual. Again, this is a very stable staff and, I think, generally a very stable school division. (E-BFL: 10, pp. 13-14)

The tremendous amounts of time and effort which went into the amalgamation of the two school divisions resulted in additional workloads and increased levels of stress for numerous individuals. The lack of adequate personnel to deal with the work of amalgamation in addition to the "regular" and ongoing responsibilities of administrating a school division was apparent, particularly within the Beaver Flat School Division.

The Secretary-Treasurers in both the Turnhill and Beaver Flat School Divisions played a crucial role throughout the amalgamation process. In addition to their regular duties, the Secretary-Treasurers collected, analysed and reported information with regard to business matters. Without a doubt, their workload was vastly increased as a result of the amalgamation.

Department of Education and Regional Office Support

Support from the two offices was most satisfactory. Directors reported prompt responses to any queries and numerous meetings took place both locally and in Regina. Regional Directors indicated one of their most important roles was to attend and provide information and support at community meetings. The following comments illustrate the above:

> The [Regional Directors] were really in tandem with this whole thing. Those people were honest and up front and really quick to provide information, to respond to questions, or to request information from the Minister and her department. (D-T: 14, p. 2)

> Overall, there just wasn't a need for mediation....[The Boards] identified problems for us, we took it to the department, we came up with interpretations that allowed them to move forward. So there weren't really

> barriers, but there certainly were wrinkles that we had to get through. (R-T: 3, p. 4)

In addition to this high degree of support from the Department of Education, the Minister responded to and assisted in the resolution of both the Longford and the First Nations situations.

Mechanisms for the Resolution of Disputes

The ASC served as the chief mechanism for the resolution of disputes. When an issue arose, those directly affected by the issue were asked, as a committee, to first meet and then present their respective arguments and suggestions to the steering committee. At that time, the ASC as a committee in whole would discuss the issue and make recommendations to the Board(s) who then made the decisions and passed any necessary motions. Certainly, there were numerous disputes as well as a degree of rancor over various issues. These will be dealt with as each issue is discussed. The following comments illustrate how the resolution of disputes was addressed:

> The two Directors and the Secretary-Treasurers had a very good approach to working, they were doing it from a collaborative, win-win situation from day one and the steering committee involved every group, about 20 people. (R-T: 3, p. 3)

> I feel that the process has been positive....I think that by working together and bringing in Beaver Flat right on the off set, when they made the decision they wanted to come our way [was a critical point in the process]....And we worked together right to the end. Like sometimes I felt we had too many people on the steering committee....But when you have a committee as large as we did, it seems like you have more things to work out and more input to work with. It's hard to get them together. My feelings are that [with a smaller committee] we would have been on stream in September. (B-T: 12, pp. 22-23)

Disputes and disagreements, such as they were, occurred behind the closed doors of the individual school division's Board meetings. A Beaver Flat board member stated:

> Within our division, our discussion was very open. Although consensus [on the Board] was important, sometimes a motion and a vote was the only way to resolve a point. It was a very distressful time, especially with the split. Some people [in Longford] did not feel [Turnhill] was the way to go. (B-BF: 15, p.1)

> Our Board was not unanimous on many of the issues, but, for each item, we looked at the issues and the options we had and made decisions. The issue of Longford joining Ladybank was a hot discussion item; the Board would have liked to see the division move as a whole unit. The other hot item was the discussion as to division of assets and liabilities. (ST-BF: 24, p. 3)

Elements of the amalgamation process such as working together from the onset of amalgamation discussions, the ongoing cooperation and collaboration between the two divisions, and the structure and mandate of the ASC were instrumental in setting the stage for the resolution of issues. In most instances, the ensuing solutions were acceptable to those involved in the various issues. However, not all individuals were satisfied with the process and resolution of issues all the time. Decisions were not always unanimous and in those instances, the Boards used a voting process to determine the course of action.

Summary

The amalgamation of the Beaver Flat and Turnhill School Divisions was typified by the inclusion of interested parties and/or stakeholders in the amalgamation process. All stakeholders wanted to know what was happening and why. Community meetings provided a venue for consultation, the sharing of information, and public input into issues and concerns. School newsletters, media releases, and individual contacts by Board and ASC members assisted in the dissemination of information.

Local leadership for the amalgamation process was provided by the Boards, Directors, Secretary-Treasurers, and members of the ASC. Provincial leadership was provided by the Department of Education and the Minister of Education. This support

took the form of support when requested, assistance in the resolution of a number of issues and legal advice. However, the degree of political leadership with regard to the province's plan for the amalgamation of school divisions came under close scrutiny and received a degree of criticism.

Timing was a "critical" factor throughout the amalgamation process and included the need for time to investigate and weigh all factors before making decisions, time to do the work associated with the amalgamation, time to adjust to new and different modes of operation, and time to continue with the "regular" operational responsibilities of the respective school divisions. In order to provide ample time for all of the above, it was deemed important to have an adequate number of personnel. However, this was not always the case, particularly in the Beaver Flat School Division.

Most disputes were resolved under the umbrella of the ASC and its mandate to discuss issues, suggest possible solutions, and make recommendation to the Boards. A collaborative approach to problem solving ensured that the various stakeholder groups were able to partake in all aspects of the amalgamation process.

Critical Incidences: Resolution of Issues

Throughout the resolution of issues, considerable effort was made by the respective Boards to solicit input from all members of the ASC, who, in turn, represented the views of their colleagues. Some of the identified issues were laden with emotion and how they were dealt with resulted in varying degrees of satisfaction, both with the process and the decision.

The Longford Issue

The subdivision of Longford's decision to disjoin from the Beaver Flat Division and to amalgamate with Ladybank was probably the most acrimonious issue arising out of the amalgamation of the Turnhill and Beaver Flat School Divisions. For the Longford ratepayers, a number of motivating factors prompted this decision. Located at the far western end of the division, the Longford school bused senior students to a Ladybank school for industrial arts instruction, part of the Longford school population was drawn from the Ladybank area, and extramural sports activities took place between the two high schools. Numerous residents traveled west to an urban shopping center. Longford believed the Ladybank Division, being more "rural" in nature than the Turnhill Division, would have a better understanding of their situation and provide them with adequate services, all at a lower mill rate. In addition, it was vital for Longford to retain a K-12 school with direct representation on a Board of Education. In their opinion, amalgamation with the Turnhill School Division would put this into jeopardy.

> I don't know the community very well, other than by reputation, but it seems to be a strong community-minded place. You go to that community and there's a school, a hospital, an old folks home, banks and restaurants. It's a lively little community, so they would not want a decision made for them that was going to cost them their school. They would see that as the heart of their community, so I understand the passion involved. I don't know that they've made the right decision. (D-T: 14, p. 17)

As indicated by the quotation, Longford had a strong sense of self-identity, an identity they were determined to retain. Maintaining their identity as a viable community translated into the retainment of their K-12 school.

The decision by the Beaver Flat Board to amalgamate as one entity with the Turnhill Division was not well received by the Longford subdivision. As a result of public meetings and local surveys and with the involvement and support of the Town Council and the rural municipality, the subdivision of Longford indicated to their Board a desire to

explore and, if possible, to amalgamate with the Ladybank Division. Discussions ensued and, in the end, the Beaver Flat Board agreed to Longford's request. It was a difficult and emotionally laden decision, a decision which caused rifts within the Longford community, the Beaver Flat Board, and the division as a whole. Perhaps the best way to describe the situation is to listen to the voices of those involved in the dispute:

Longford Comments:

> Well, there's sort of a natural divide....This side of the division has had a tradition of going to Ladybank as far as the business community is concerned and a lot of parents that live in this community actually work in the Ladybank area. (E-BF: 9, p. 2)

> I don't know what would have happened if we had stayed as a group, because one of the things was, we definitely wanted a board member from [our school]....When the community leaders, the local board representative, the mayor and reeve came to our division office in Falkland, the Beaver Flat Board kind of laughed at it. They said, "Hey, we're elected to decide what's better for the students, they're [the mayor, reeve] elected to run their town." So that kind of put it into place as to where we were....Talking to the local MLA wasn't getting us anywhere and so the town and RM councillors went to their areas and there was only about 5 percent who wouldn't sign. Yes, you know, maybe it is better that we went with Ladybank. So we actually delivered it to the Minister and all of a sudden they let us go. Now I really think that the government needs to make sure that the community wants to go.....But then, after that, the process changed because, like I said, there were no more meetings really with Ladybank, it was just that we were kind of left on our own. (B-BFL: 11, pp. 8-9)

> You can offer them the option to be part of another group and if you choose to not go with the mainstream option, I think that's acceptable as well. Amalgamation has to be collegial, it has to be open, and it has to be flexible. Those would be the three things, in my view, that would make amalgamation work. (E-BFL: 10, p. 7)

Beaver Flat Comments:

Longford's decision to join the Ladybank Division was done through a political referendum. Since the majority of ratepayers had no children, it was almost a ratepayer's voice, not a parent's voice. Longford was not going to be told what to do. From our perspective, it would have been in the best interests of the children to have stayed with us. As far as accessibility to programming, Turnhill has more people to offer things. (E-BF: 22, p. 3)

Longford's situation was very trying. The drive to go west seemed to be more directed by the mayor and reeve and once the decision was made, many were unhappy. It seemed to move too fast, the board members were not sure of what was best and prolonging the process was leading to extra costs to all boards. (E-BF: 15, p. 2)

We'd had a strong indication from our teaching staff [of the entire Beaver Flat Division] that they wanted to go as a group. And for a long time the [Beaver Flat] Board, through majority vote, insisted that [amalgamation as one group] was going to happen. The people in the Longford community were very upset about that...and finally, the Beaver Flat Board said, "All right, if that's what you really want to do." There had been letters sent from the town and the rural municipality saying they didn't want to go to Turnhill. People were actually getting involved in a way that was not appropriate, which was not cordial, not the way things are generally done....[It was] almost to the point where Turnhill was saying, "Well, thank you very much, we don't want you either." (D-BF: 1, p. 4)

Turnhill Comments:

So I think the fact that Longford decided they didn't want to come this way was actually a bit of a blessing in disguise, because that eliminated [the issue of representation]. And from their perspective, I guess they saw something different or better opportunities for their children by going that way. And we came from the perspective, I mean, that's fine by us, like whatever's best for you folks. We don't want to force anybody, we're not willing to drag those kids kicking and screaming to the Turnhill School Division. If you want headaches, that's a good way to get them. (ST-T: 2, p. 12)

I didn't want to lead them on and say,"Oh no, our board will never close your school." I don't know that, so all I was saying was, "It may be." If any change at all occurs it would likely just be with the seniors...and I think they kind of took that as gospel, what we're going to see is this big school system that is going to close our ten to twelve. So that may have been part of them

> saying, "Well, we don't want to risk it....And finally [we] came to the point of saying, "Beaver Flat, deal with Longford and then come back and talk to us some more because we can't deal with Longford, *you* have to deal with Longford. So determine what you're doing with them and get that settled out and then we'll continue. So that was fairly critical, whether they were part of the division or not. (D-T: 14, pp. 5, 18)

As one can see, resolution of this issue was not without rancor and infighting. However, once the decision was made, all parties continued to work through the amalgamation process, albeit on two separate fronts. A number of research participants also suggested that the resolution of this issue could have benefitted from more time to discuss implications and to receive input from those within their community.

Division of Assets and Liabilities

Research participants perceived the division of assets and liabilities as one of the more critical incidents in the amalgamation process. Had the original plan to move as a block to another division materialized, this would not have become an issue. Working through this issue required prodigious amounts of time and energy; the division of assets and liabilities was the last item to fall into place in the amalgamation process. Using figures provided by independent evaluation as well as their own records, the three Secretary-Treasurers concluded there was little difference whether the formula for the division of Beaver Flat's assets and liabilities was based on enrollments or assessment worth. There was a general feeling that a 75/25 spit would be reasonable, 75% to Turnhill, 25% to Ladybank. Details that had to be worked out included the division of school buses, the bus garage, the office building, a school no longer in use by the division, and the capital reserve. In the end, the equipment in each school went with that school, buildings and property in each of the subdivisions stayed within their respective areas, buses were allocated to Longford and Falkland/Spence so they would be proportionally equal in terms of age and size, and the capital reserve moved with Longford to the Ladybank Division.

The majority of all three boards, Ladybank, Beaver Flat and Turnhill, were in general agreement with the division of assets and liabilities. However, that was less so with a number of individuals in the Longford subdivision who voiced their disillusionment with both the division of assets and liabilities and the process of that division:

> As the taxpayers of Longford we weren't happy with the way things were being split. But we had no place to really go, because the main thing Ladybank wanted was to make sure they got the capital reserve. Because it was earmarked for [renovations to] Longford school, so [Ladybank] could say to their taxpayers, "Hey, if there's any work to be done in Longford we've got funding from them to do this."...Like Peel school, [the boards] said if it's sold by January 1 then the money will be divided, and if it's after the 1st it goes to Turnhill. Well, I couldn't see it because the tax payers here helped to pay for that school...Falkland and Spence schools are newer. They've got industrial arts labs; they didn't really look at the value. They said, "You've got your school, we've got our school."....So then they said , "We will give you a little better deal on buses," but they also gave us some of the older ones. Like one is parked already and the other one is up for certification in July and will definitely not make it. (BFL: *, pp. 9-10, 20)

> But we're not the only ones. There are other [divisions] that are going to be split. There should be someone from the government that can actually, really look through all this and get a fair value. We really figured, and still do, the contents should have been evaluated and then we [would get] our equal share of the tax through all the years. That's the way it should have been divided, but it wasn't. We got Longford school and the contents and [those dividing the assets] didn't look if the chairs were twenty years old or if the chairs were broken, or if the school was all run down, it didn't matter. We didn't think that was a fair way and there was actually nobody to turn to. (B-BFL: 11, pp. 20-21)

> After we had met and some of these assets were discussed, we heard Ladybank wasn't happy with it. All of a sudden they were having a meeting and we understood it was just a director going over there and discussing things. But it ended up that the committee from Turnhill went to Ladybank, so they sat there without Beaver Flat even being involved and they divided our assets...without us. (BFL: *, p. 1)

As the following quotation illustrates, the viewpoint from the Turnhill/Beaver Flat side was somewhat different.

> [The bus issue] is interesting because we sat around a table here, looking at the buses and wondering, "What if Longford didn't get the best buses?" But it was up to them and I recall having a discussion back in November saying, "Well, when you guys divide your buses up, you decide whatever sized buses are needed....Yes, one was a standard and one was an automatic. But the other thing is, I'm not sure that we could have pleased Longford if we could have walked on water....They got all of the capital reserve, all ninety to a hundred thousand dollars, every penny of it, and that wasn't enough. The board, to my surprise, gave them the whole capital reserve. Then they wanted this and they wanted something else. So it was difficult to please everyone. (T: *, pp. 18-19)

It is evident that, without a doubt, the division of assets and liabilities was the most fractious of the critical incidents. It was at this point that self-interests came into the fore and while the 75/25 Turnhill/Ladybank split was deemed satisfactory, it was the actual division of property and other assets that came into dispute. Feelings of dissatisfaction over both the process and end results were expressed and were particularly evident in the Longford subdivision.

Personnel

Dealing with personnel issues was considered to be both a critical incident and issue by the Boards and employees of the two divisions. The ASC played a vital role toward reconciling local agreements with both teachers and support staff. Teachers and support staff from each division had representation on the steering committee and, like other representatives on the ASC, these individuals acted as a liaison between their groups and the ASC, kept their groups informed, discussed additional concerns, and then presented these issues and recommendations as to their resolution to the ASC. Employee groups from the respective divisions met both individually and as a larger group. For many of the Beaver Flat employees, being cognizant of the Beaver Flat situation, the decision to amalgamate with Turnhill was met with relief. From that point in time, their organizations' concerns focused on welfare issues such as job retention and what would happen to

collective agreements when moving from one division to another and, for teachers, educational issues.

Support staff. The support staff, consisting of division employees other than teachers, expressed satisfaction with the amalgamation process. Their representatives were included in all meetings and could offer input on issues other than those just pertaining to support staff. It was their responsibility to report back to their respective groups and then to discuss and bring further issues to the amalgamation committee. Representatives from both divisions worked together to address negotiation issues and support staff from Beaver Flat were invited to observe the negotiation process used by Turnhill and their support staff. The end result was a positive attitude to the amalgamation. With regard to salary, Turnhill wages were higher than those in Beaver Flat. When amalgamation occurred, Beaver Flat employees became part of the Turnhill support staff and were placed on the same salary scale as Turnhill employees.

Commenting on the role of the support staff on the ASC, someone remarked:

> I didn't see great representation from the professional support staff. They were on the committee but they never once gave presentations or suggestions or anything. Like I mean, they may not be as used to being involved in [negotiations] as teachers are...I would suspect that somewhere along the line, early on in the process, the [support staff group] would have concerns....Regarding the two divisions, the salaries [paid to support staff] was vastly different. One of the issues was most of the [Beaver Flat] staff, their secretarial and janitorial staff, were way underpaid and so there had to be some parity. As far as I know, it was all dictated by the Turnhill Board. (E-T: 5, 5)

Issues of redundancy and possible job loss were somewhat moot as only one secretarial position was affected by the amalgamation. Finding themselves with both security of employment and increased salaries, the Beaver Flat support staff were content.

Teachers. With regards to the professional staff in both school divisions, concerns can be categorized into two areas, welfare issues and educational issues. Primary welfare

issues included succession rights as to collective agreements, contracts of employment, seniority within the new division, and school transfers. Educational issues focused on opportunities for students; support for students and teachers; the effect of amalgamation on the teaching/learning environment in the classroom, school, and division; the role of consultants; and adjustments to change resulting from the amalgamation.

Teachers were concerned with welfare issues. Over the years, negotiations between Boards and teachers had resulted in local agreements which, hopefully, had resulted in the best of situations for both parties. From a teacher's perspective, this agreement represented the culmination of many years of effort to improve the quality of their teacher work life. Doubtless, this was the case for both Beaver Flat and Turnhill teachers; their local teacher associations were reluctant to lose any perceived gains. At the time of amalgamation and because of the nature of the amalgamation, namely, the disestablishment of a school division, the legislation in place called for the cessation of Beaver Flat's LINC agreement on the date of amalgamation. Both teacher groups were unhappy with the situation. After numerous meetings as individual and joint teacher groups, as well as presentations to the ASC, the teachers suggested the following:

> Basically, what we suggested was that the two contracts continue...and that would go on forever until we negotiated one contract to satisfy everybody. Our intent, what we said in the beginning, is that we would work as hard as we could to get one contract in place as soon as possible. That's what the steering committee recommended to the [Turnhill] Board. However, [the Board passed a motion that] as of June, 1998 it has to be done....It still bothers me, after all this time, when we went to that steering committee and presented the open endedness of this contract negotiation so nobody would have to fight against a deadline or [use it] to pressure the other group [and] the whole steering committee said, "That's the way it has to be." Then the Board just made unilateral changes and said, "That's it, we're going to do it." That wasn't the way to involve people and make them feel they were being involved.....Our deadline can't be increased anymore. However, the government changed the legislation this spring so that any other amalgamations that follow won't have a deadline. (E-T: *, pp. 3-4)

Turnhill's position was that maintaining two separate agreements to serve one group of teachers for an undetermined period of time was not an acceptable proposition. Their wish was to have all teachers under one contract as quickly as possible. To operate under two separate agreements was not seen as a satisfactory situation.

Differences between the two agreements were, in the opinion of teachers, not major. However, they did want to address such items as differences in the amount of preparation time for teachers, earned days off, and special leaves. Seniority issues may become important, particularly in the event of redundancies. The transfer of records regarding years of service were transferred to Turnhill from Beaver Flat with all years of service being recognized. Yet another welfare issue was that of teacher transfers. Given that the division was going to split, two teachers chose to transfer out of the Longford subdivision prior to the amalgamation, while the majority of teachers accepted the community's decision and remained in the Longford subdivision. After the amalgamation date, at the close of the school year, one or two transfers resulting from either a teacher request or a staffing need transpired from what was previously a Beaver Flat school to a Turnhill location. The transfer issue evoked a variety of reactions from teachers in both divisions, as the following comments illustrate:

> In spring, when [Turnhill] asked if we were interested in transfers everyone said, "No, we want to stay exactly where we're at." As a group of teachers we're very, very strong in our professional relationship. We're all supportive [of each other]....You see, we were getting word through the grapevine that [Turnhill's] perception is that moving teachers around is good for the system. So that's hanging over the head of the teachers. (E-BF: 22, p.13)

> There was the strongest belief that promises had been made; promises in the sense that teachers would be found jobs. But a few [teachers in our division, in the last years] were declared redundant and, not at one point, were the teachers short-listed or considered for positions....At one meeting [Turnhill] said, "Beaver Flat teachers will be considered first for any jobs openings that come up in the new division." So we're greatly concerned about the perceived unfairness of allocation of jobs to Beaver Flat teachers. (E-BF: *, p. 4)

> We had a couple of people express interest in transferring and the one individual wanted one particular school; there wasn't an opening in that particular school, so [the teacher] chose to stay.... Well, we wouldn't transfer [a teacher from their present placement] unless the circumstances were very dire. (D-T: 14, p.7-8)

With regard to dealing with the successor rights of local teacher agreements, a Department official had this to say:

> Maybe the closest it came to a dispute is how they would treat the LINC agreements. And that didn't get to a dispute because the Turnhill Board agreed to allow the Beaver Flat people to bring their agreement with them. Now that's an interesting thing. That's one [situation] where we, as a Department, sort of turned a blind eye to that. Because, as the Education Act reads, if you disestablish then teachers automatically take on the agreements of the "new" board. So we allowed this, but the Turnhill Board put a one year proviso on it. This being the [receiving] board's decision, we allowed that to happen. Since then, there has been legislation passed to allow successor rights to go along with the teachers. (R-T: 3, pp.3-4)

A member of the STF made this comment with regard to the collective bargaining process as affected by a school division amalgamation:

> If they [boards and teachers] really believe in collective bargaining and really put the effort forth that's necessary to resolve the issue, then they will get a collective agreement. I think it's incumbent on both parties to do that. It's no different from entering into negotiations for a revised collective agreement in an existing school division. They've got some added complications but we've been through those before in Saskatchewan. And so I think the principle is that collective agreements should not disappear through the reflection of time, nor should they disappear just because, through no reason or action on the part of a teacher, teachers move from one employment board to another....I think that was the one aspect of the agreement between Beaver Flat and Turnhill that did not reach consensus. They got to a point where they couldn't go any further and a decision had to be made. However, the legislation is now in place to resolve the matter. (F: 6, pp. 2-3)

Although the teaching body was not happy with either the resolution regarding collective bargaining or the manner in which it was resolved, the raising of this issue resulted in

legislation which clarified the situation for any subsequent amalgamations within the province.

A consequence of the Board's decision to limit the time available to reach a new and joint local agreement was the negative impact it had on teachers' perceptions of the Board's integrity and whether the Board was acting in good faith. As a result, the ensuing negotiations between the board and teachers did have its difficult moments.

> It has been difficult working through all these issues; the Board blew up on the third meeting regarding the grandfathering of rights. Now the LINC settlement has to be done before January 1998. The next meeting went a lot better and so things are on a more congenial level. We are a bit put out, as we have to work to deadline, where now the provincial legislation has changed that, there is no longer a limit on the negotiation time for new LINC agreements. We may use interest-based negotiation; this looks at forward, cooperative, collaborative movement to negotiate agreements; there is a question if there's an interest in this and if funding for the training is available. (E-T: *, pp.2-3)

In addition to dealing with teacher welfare, teachers in both divisions were questioning educational issues such as the possible effects of amalgamation on the teaching/learning environment in the classroom, the school, and the division. Concerns were voiced over pupil/teacher ratios, central office support for teachers given the increased division size both numerically and geographically, issues of curriculum support, the role of consultants in relation to teachers and classroom instruction, and program implementation for students with special needs. Turnhill teachers were questioning if they would continue to receive the same level of support as they had enjoyed previous to the amalgamation, while Beaver Flat teachers were asking, "Will amalgamation mean better educational opportunities for our students and increased support?" Levels of concern and opinions on these issues were as varied as the teaching population:

Longford Comments:

There is a great deal of concern, among teachers particularly, about amalgamation and the effect it's going to have on their working life and their situation. Why should we amalgamate? What's in it for us? Am I going to be transferred? Am I going to have a new teaching load? I would like people to be aware that these concerns are universal to divisions undergoing amalgamation. Obviously, amalgamation has had an impact on what I teach. In order to bring our pupil teacher ratio into alignment with the amalgamating partners, on this staff it meant a reduction of 1.5 teachers. We've had to change programing; we've lost things like preparation time. So again, yes, amalgamation has had a significant impact in that regard. (E-BFL: 10, p. 14)

Beaver Flat Comments:

We are used to quick and easy access. Hopefully this will continue. We need immediate turn-around time on issues or situations of a critical nature which require prompt attention and resolution....Regarding special services, we need an understanding of what is out there, who is doing what. You can get consultants, but with the size of the division, consultants *are* spread out. (E-BF: 22, p. 2)

[Teachers] felt some resistance to the move, often equating "help" to "evaluation." No one else had worked with consultants, even anywhere else, and so there were concerns re expectations and amount of workload.... Now that we are amalgamated, we have the opportunity to see a different way of working. The last three directors, put together, were not here as much as what we are experiencing now. (E-BF: 19, p. 2)

Distance is a real factor. We were very spoiled in Beaver Flat School Division because everything was central...and we tended to be more active because it was central. Within 20 minutes we could have our meeting and the meeting was efficient. You didn't have 250 teachers to deal with. You made a decision, you'd phone your staff, and away you'd go. Now it is not like that. Anytime you're asked to be professionally involved, you really have to consider the amount of travel time, and the amount of time you are going to be out of your classroom. And that's a big deal in this [the Turnhill] division, time out of the classroom. So the time you are given for professional activities has been reduced. We lost all of our preparation time, too...and so the idea of individual or one-on-one planning, core planning just doesn't exist...it has created some stress, because there was a loss and they'd said we were not going to lose anything, we were going to get more, we were going to get better....Yes, it's quality of teacher work load in the work place. And I think

all the teachers gave all of their support for amalgamation because of the perception that their quality of work load and work life would be better. So that's a real disappointment. (E-BF: *, pp. 5-6)

Turnhill Comments:

As teachers we have asked, "Why are we doing this? We are already a large division." We're concerned we will have less service due to more staff and students. We were told there would be no change, nothing extra as far as support people already in place; so, with five to six hundred new students, hopefully this should not have too much impact. However, due to funding cuts and reassessment, we are having to cut one assistant director, so this will likely filter down. Principals may well be asked to handle more responsibilities. This is a major concern; all teaching administrators are already full out....It is difficult to hire a principal when the work load is so overwhelming. (E-T: 21, pp. 3-4)

The amalgamation has given teachers the opportunity to move if they want. I don't get a particularly cohesive feeling with the Beaver Flat Teachers group, it will take a while, as we do not get together as a group much. Most of the professional development is now done through the [central office], though we can perhaps exchange some expertise among ourselves. I can see our local professional development becoming more invigorating, exciting, as we work with and share our expertise locally. Changing our [teachers'] meeting place to the middle of the area may encourage teachers to become involved in our organization and in committees; before, traveling all the way from the north of Beaver Flat to the south end of Turnhill made this very difficult. It was impossible to be on time for after-school meetings. We need more representation from all areas of the division. (E-T: 21, p.5)

Needless to say, teachers in both the Beaver Flat and Turnhill Divisions viewed the amalgamation both with apprehension and hope. It is important to remember the participants were interviewed within six months of the actual amalgamation date of January 1, 1997. Their comments and perceptions are pertinent to the time and place of the research study only.

Representation on the Board of Education.

Representation on the new Board of Education unfolded on two distinct fronts, representation by subdivision and representation for First Nations groups. Provincial legislation provides for a maximum of ten board members. Therefore, at the beginning of the amalgamation process, this *was* an issue. Turnhill consisted of eight subdivisions and Beaver Flat had three subdivisions. The original plan was, that upon amalgamation, the Beaver Flat subdivisions would be reduced to two and boundary lines would be redrawn. It was not a satisfactory solution. The Beaver Flat subdivisions were most reluctant to relinquish direct representation on the Board. The problem was resolved when Longford decided to amalgamate with the Ladybank Division. At that time, Longford was assured of representation on the Ladybank Board, the two subdivisions of Falkland and Spence raised the number of board members in Turnhill from eight to the allowed maximum of ten, and the two First Nations reserves in Beaver Flat would be represented at Turnhill board meetings but without voting privileges. This would be the same as the situation for the First Nations group already within the Turnhill Division.

However, the Eagle Reserve had a different take on the situation. Historically, the relationship between the Eagle Reserve and Beaver Flat was cooperative and cordial. Having received voting status on the Beaver Flat Board in the 1970s, the Eagle Reserve was reluctant to give that up, even though they would have been represented by the Spence subdivision. Furthermore, band members could not run for election because they were not part of the Spence subdivision. Continued representation with voting privileges was a foremost concern of the Eagle Reserve and so they appealed to the Minister of Education, meeting with her in November, 1996.

> And our concern was based on this: We had been active for 36 years in this school division and now we're going to be disestablished with no thought or no representation on our behalf....so [the Minister] took into account our history. We brought the former member for our school division in who had retired....She's an Elder who sits on the school committee and she gave the background of [our

> relationship] with Beaver Flat....The Minister listened and...the next thing we knew, the order came down for disestablishment and we were part of it. We had [maintained] our subdivision status. (B-BF: 8, p. 5)

Thus, by special order of the Minister, the new Turnhill School Division would have an eleven member Board of Education. Such being the case, this would not have been a problem for the Turnhill Board. However, the Eagle Reserve having gained full board status, the remaining reserve in Beaver Flat has indicated an interest in and applied for subdivision status. Both the Turnhill Board and Director expressed concern over the issue:

> Now our concern is that we have a total of about less than 100 students from those two reserves, and if they both get subdivision status they would have two board reps on the division board of Turnhill School Division, where [two of our towns] have over a thousand students each. So those [members] represent over 1000 kids...and then for thirty kids you'd have a representative? So that was our point to the Minister. (D-T: 14, pp. 21-22)

A suggestion that one voting member could represent *all* the First Nations groups did not sit well with the Aboriginal population.

> [There are] two First Nations groups and I think Beaver Flat finally caught on that even though you are First Nations, it doesn't mean that each First Nations group thinks and does the same as another First Nations group. Each one has its own way of seeing and doing things....I do hope that boards do look at it from a larger view. This Board [Turnhill] seems to be pretty good. (B-BF: 8, p. 14)

The Turnhill Board believed this issue could also have implications with regard to the First Nations Reserve already located within their division. At the time of writing, the two remaining First Nations groups continue to exercise their right to attend board meetings and partake in discussions, albeit without voting privileges.

Budgetary Considerations

Ongoing consultation and collaboration between the school divisions had resulted in a rationalization of any differences in mill rates and pupil teacher ratio. The original plan, with an amalgamation in the fall of 1996, was to prorate and split the total budget. However, with the new amalgamation date of January 1, 1997, this was no longer necessary, the amalgamation date now coinciding with the beginning of the division's fiscal year. However, Beaver Flat budget allocations in 1996 did become an issue. Given that the amalgamation was moving forward, consultation and collaborative planning was an important facet of the turnover process. However, it was the view of several Turnhill research participants that the Beaver Flat School Division did not act in good faith on a few issues. Examples of this included the sale of portable classrooms which, in view of Turnhill's increasing school population, would have been a great asset and the upgrading of Beaver Flat's computer labs without consultation as to their compatibility with Turnhill's technology plan.

> They [Beaver Flat] were needing to upgrade their computers...and so, they had some money set aside in reserves or whatever, so before they amalgamated [Beaver Flat] made sure that was done, a kind of legacy on the part of the Beaver Flat School Division closing up; they left this for the kids....So they have Pentium equipped computers. I suppose when you look at something like that, they don't know us. We know us,...we would have seen that their schools were equipped with labs....Those monies, had it been there, would have been spent that way. But I don't think it's unusual that their board would have said, "Well, that's all fine and dandy, but why do we need to trust this when we can spend our money on our kids before we go?" Reverse that [and] the board members here are saying, "Well, they came with no dowry at all. They joined us and it's all take and no give."
>
> The one that hurt us the most, and probably it was just an oversight, we badly needed a few portables...and they sold them right before Christmas. We didn't even know they had them and that would have been a tremendous dowry to us. They just up and sold them. And I suspect quite possibly [Beaver Flat] never even thought about it, but my point is, why *didn't* they think? (T: *, pp. 20-21)

Yet another issue arose over differences in ways of budgeting. This first manifested itself over the funding of student travel to sports events. Traditionally, the Beaver Flat Division paid for travel costs out of the central office budget. On the other hand, Turnhill's policy allowed district boards to levy, through the Board of Education, a local levy of approximately 0.75 mills. This discretionary amount of money, supplemented by local fund raising efforts, allowed subdivisions in consultation with school administrators, to address locally identified needs, one of which was the cost of sports travel. Upon amalgamation, the Falkland and Spence schools were suddenly without a means to fund student travel. Turnhill resolved this by allocating special funds to cover this and other contingencies in the first months of amalgamation. Providing the funds was not the issue. Rather, it was the first issue which arose post-amalgamation, an issue which directly affected the Turnhill students, parents, and teachers and, as such, its significance was in the response and resolution of the problem by the Turnhill Board. The issue is representative of the frustration experienced by the Beaver Flat schools as they grappled with new procedures and new ways of doing things. Almost all research participants mentioned the incident when interviewed.

The importance of understanding budgetary procedures and protocols was a singular issue for in-school administrators.

> The budget is a big thing. Money affects everything you do and knowing how it will be handled, how it will affect your individual school is important. There is a definite need to have a method, to work out the what, how, and why and for all people to know this, to alleviate the frustrations of the principal, the staff, the subdivision trustees, the people in the community. There could, should have been an orientation for the administrators, trustees and board members to provide an understanding of such things as dealing with the central office, understanding roles, access procedures, the operation of the Turnhill organization. On a day to day basis, we needed a plan as to how our role had changed, the responsibilities we were expected to undertake. (E-BF: 23, pp. 4-5)

It was apparent that the in-coming school administrators were somewhat overwhelmed by the changes in operating policy and their need to gain a quick and thorough understanding of the implications of budgetary procedures and protocols. Support was provided through administration meetings and in-school visits by central office personnel. However, at the same time and in addition to making their own adjustments, principals were inundated with questions posed by their staff members. It was a baptism by fire.

Mill Rate. A mill rate variance of four and one-half mills was addressed by increasing the mill rate in the Beaver Flat Division to within one point of the Turnhill mill rate in the year prior to the amalgamation. This decision increased Beaver Flat's mill rate from 69.5 to 74 mills, an increase of four and one-half mills. Turnhill's current mill rate was 74 mills plus 1.5 mills for a special local levy. The Beaver Flat mill rate increase did not include the one and one-half mills special levy which provided busing for sports events and other locally designated projects at each of Turnhill's schools. The increase was not seen as unreasonable; the Beaver Flat ratepayers recognized that, without amalgamation, their mill rates would show an even greater increase. The general consensus was that if an increased mill rate would pose problems, it was best for Beaver Flat to "take the rap" and attend to the issue before the amalgamation. It was during this time that a reassessment of property was occurring throughout Saskatchewan and concerns over reassessment implications appeared to overtake the issue of increased mill rates through amalgamation action. In contrast, at that time, the Ladybank School Division's mill rate stood at 70 mills and this lower mill rate influenced Longford's decision to move to the Ladybank School Division.

Amalgamation costs. The amalgamation process was not without added costs, particularly with regard to travel allowances for the numerous meetings. It was estimated that between the two divisions some $40,000 had been put toward this purpose. At the end of the day, the ASC received $15,000 from the province to defray amalgamation

costs. Added to that was the considerable cost of the transfer of physical assets in the form of buildings and property.

> If I were to do a land titles transfer for all of the property we received from BL, we'd probably be looking at a bill somewhere in the range of $75,000. And of course we had not considered that, nobody even thought that would be an issue. So we raised that issue with the Department of Education, as to their process of looking at title transfers, so that we don't have those kinds of cost problems. (ST-T: 2, p. 5)

As it turned out, the provincial government, upon amalgamation, has waived the cost of title transfers for amalgamating school divisions. The Department also conducted an analysis of the Foundation Grant for both Turnhill and Beaver Flat. This was done in order to give the two school divisions the best possible financial break for a period of two years.

Policy Manuals

Information on the respective school divisions' policy manuals had been included in the initial exchange of information between the divisions. Upon disestablishment of a school division, the policy of the new board takes over. So, in this instance, the subdivisions joining Turnhill became part of the policy factor in Turnhill and the Longford subdivision operated under the Ladybank board policy. The intention is to deal with policy changes within the natural course of events.

Boundary Determination

The boundary line drawn between the Longford subdivision and the subdivisions joining Turnhill was determined on the basis of the attendance areas prior to the disestablishment. With all parties being in agreement, government involvement through the Educational Boundaries Commission was not required. Any requests by individuals with

regard to the boundary line were to be handled in the usual manner, namely, through communication between the respective new boards.

Summary

As stated previously, considerable effort was made by the two school boards to solicit input from both the public at large and from all members of the ASC who, in turn, represented the concerns and issues of their respective colleagues. These issues included the decision of the Longford subdivision to disjoin from the Beaver Flat Division and to amalgamate with the Ladybank Division, the subsequent division of assets and liabilities, dealing with personnel issues with regard to support staff and teachers, and representation on the Board of Education. Additional issues coming under consideration included budgetary considerations, policy manuals, and boundary determination. While many of the issues were resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the issues of Longford, the division of assets and liabilities, and the grandfathering of local teacher agreements proved to be the most contentious and value-laden. The resolution of these issues placed definite strains on the credibility of individuals in leadership positions and on the efficacy of the collaborative problem solving process. The aftermath of these issues and the perceived degrees of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with both the process and the resolution of these issues will doubtless continue to influence individuals, communities, and special interest groups for some time.

The Unforeseens

Managing a process of amalgamation necessitates action on a variety of fronts. Although the following issues have already, for the most part, been discussed, there were a number of "unforeseens" which, as identified by the participants of this study, added to the complexity of the amalgamation.

Transpiring early in the amalgamation process, the issue of the Longford subdivision and its decision to amalgamate with Ladybank School Division was, to some extent, an unforseen event. The earlier assumption of the Beaver Flat Board, that the entire division would move as one unit, was not to be. Subsequent to this decision, a parallel amalgamation process was undertaken between Longford and the Ladybank School Division. This decision necessitated the division of the assets and liabilities of Beaver Flat. Both the decision of Longford to move to Ladybank and the division of Beaver Flat's holdings proved to be among the most rancorous of amalgamation issues.

In no particular order, other "unforeseens" included the issue of board representation by the Eagle Reserve; the cost of the transfer of titles of the physical assets of Beaver Flat; issues of closure, dealing with the death of a school division; the increased length of time needed to complete the amalgamation process; orientation needs, particularly in the area of policy, forms, and procedures; budgeting issues during the amalgamation process and immediately after, in particular, differences in budgeting procedures and local school levies; the increased workload as experienced by the Turnhill office staff as the Falkland and Spence schools were brought on board, and the amount of time consumed at Turnhill board meetings to inform new board members of the history of procedures as well as the exchange of histories.

The Missed

Viewing the management of the amalgamation process from the brief time of six months post-amalgamation provided opportunity for those closely involved to identify things they might have done or done differently. High on the list was paying greater attention to such items as bringing closure to the Beaver Flat school system, conducting a teacher orientation before the date of amalgamation, and an orientation to get things running with teachers, local boards, and school administrators at the actual time of amalgamation.

The involvement of students in the amalgamation process was perceived, by some, as a "missed" issue. There was no direct involvement of students in either of the school divisions, although the Turnhill Director was a visible presence in the Beaver Flat schools both before and after the amalgamation.

> But I suppose that's another thing that we should have done, taken the opportunity to involve the students...on the amalgamation committee....Either it should be done or the administration should give some serious thought to their local culture....Now wait a minute, are our kids the kind of kids that even care about this kind of thing? I would think yes. So anyway, we did...visit with the kids in both the schools and welcomed then and said, "Now you're a part of a new system. You really haven't been involved but we want you to know you're not going to see a lot of change. We hope your teachers and your local boards in the town will have more support so you can continue to do the thing you're doing....You'll see some new faces in your school, people that are here to support your teachers and work with you, but your teachers aren't changing...for you it's pretty much the same. (D-T: 14, pp. 5-6)

High school students from the Spence and Longford subdivisions participated in focus group interviews. In both locations, questions as to the process and its management elicited little reaction. Student comments focused on their perceptions of how the amalgamation had affected their individual worlds and are summarized by the following comments:

> It is good to be part of a bigger school division. Before, we only knew students from Longford and Beaver Flat. The student voice is heard better and there are more choices in the classes we can take. The competition is better, both in school and in sports. In sports, we have different people to play against; we are meeting different students. We weren't the biggest school in the division before, so it hasn't made a great difference in that way. (W-BF: 18, p.1)

> It won't make a lot of difference to us. We already do things with them [Ladybank] like sports and some classes. We know all the kids, through hockey and stuff like that. (W-BFL: 24, p. 2)

Students in the Beaver Flat Division were not unhappy with the amalgamation. Indeed, they did not appear to be well informed with regard to any of the amalgamation issues. Because they were already acquainted with students in the other divisions, generally as a result of both in and out of school recreational activities, the high school students welcomed the opportunity for expanded services and contact with a greater number of students.

Yet another reason for the students' apparent lack of concern over amalgamation implications was provided by a board member:

> Students? I don't think it made too much difference with them, except now I think they are going to feel a lot more cared for, not personally, but I think better services for them are now possible.[On student perceptions of their needs] All I'm saying, just to give you the proper perspective on this is, if you are a student, say in grade 10 and [have never known anything else], how do you know what's there? How would you know that you're missing something? (B-BF: 8, pp. 15-16)

Although students were not included in amalgamation discussions or as members of the ASC, the Turnhill central office staff made a concerted effort to visit the Beaver Flat schools both before and after the amalgamation so as to become a visible and familiar presence in their "new" schools.

Post-Amalgamation Issues

Participant interviews occurred, for the most part, approximately six months after the actual amalgamation date. During the interviews, participants identified issues they perceived as being not only pre or during amalgamation but also as post-amalgamation concerns. These included board issues such as the size of the board, longer meetings, the changing of board members as a result of elections and their orientation needs, the personal agendas of board members, and an increased decentralization of responsibilities. Also mentioned were changes in the role of local school trustees, their need to understand

new procedures, the need for open and ongoing discussion between board members and local trustees, and the need for a review of policies and the continued sharing of the history of the respective divisions. Numerous comments were made with respect to the issue of building trust, particularly with regard to the Director and the Board and their dealings with the various employee groups, communities, and schools.

In virtually every interview there was a recognition of the need to *continue* to discuss issues evolving from the amalgamation.

> After the "done deal" in January, there has been a need to continue to monitor the amalgamation process, to ascertain any oversights; it is an advantage to Turnhill to address these things immediately. Rather than that happening, it was addressed in a more off-hand manner. So I would say, "What's the scoop? Can we continue to do this to the end of June?" The answer was usually, "Yes," but it is important to find out how it is done, so that down the road it is not affecting you or costing you something for the next year. (E-BF: 23, p. 3)

> If you did it [amalgamation] at the beginning of the school year, then you would have time for your orientation....What happened last year, we started with Turnhill's documentation and all that, but no, you don't have to fill this out because that's not going to Turnhill, because we are still under Beaver Flat. Then, all of a sudden, on January 1st, you're under Turnhill and you're expected to fill out month end forms, their expectations for all of that is different. So, January 1st is not a good time for amalgamation to occur. I know it's calender year versus the academic year. The academic year in your new division would be a lot better because you have time to get involved in all of the professional development activities and so on. (E-BF: 13, pp. 11-12)

The newly amalgamated division was not unaware of these issues and although exhaustive efforts had been made to deal with all aspects of the amalgamation, in retrospect, there was recognition of the enormity of dealing with the complexity and multitude of fronts which need to be addressed in an amalgamation.

> Still, when January 8th came, it's like being told how to drive your new vehicle and then actually starting it up and steering down the road. It's the newness of the thing. So that's what we didn't pay enough attention to. (D-T: 14, p.4)

Regardless of the amount of pre-planning and discussion, individuals experienced a high degree of uncertainty and upheaval at the actual time of amalgamation. Anticipation of an event is frequently different from the actual experience. Although one knows in advance that procedures will undergo change, the changes become real only when one *has* to make the changes. Loss of the familiar and entry into a new and relatively unknown state of being poses difficulties for both organizations and individuals. Dealing with and managing change in times of turbulence is a very real challenge for those involved in school division amalgamations.

Question 4

What attention was given to the political, technical and cultural aspects of change?

In turbulent times, managing change strategically is to return to basic questions about an organization's nature and purpose (Tichy, 1982). Reexamination of technical systems will result in new missions and strategies and major restructuring of the financial, production and human resource systems. The organization's political system , as reflected by succession issues, rewards and who has the power to make decisions will also need revamping. Major change will require attention to the organization's cultures—its members' values and beliefs (p. 62). Strategic management is keeping the three strands—technical, political and cultural together "in the face of changing demands brought on by technical, political and cultural changes in the environment" (p. 64).

Although the technical, political, and cultural aspects of change during the amalgamation process will be addressed individually, it is imperative for readers to keep in mind the strands are interdependent. During the course of field research, it soon became apparent to the researcher that although participants were giving voice to events related to the technical, political, and cultural aspects of change within the amalgamation process, looking at change from this specific construct was not familiar to many of the participants.

In order to extract this information from the raw data, the researcher analysed the data within the interview transcripts from a technical, political, and cultural perspective as espoused by Tichy (1982, 1983), House (1981), and Corbett and Rossman (1989).

Technical Aspects

Employing the technical perspective, the amalgamation process can be viewed as a problem to be addressed through rational or technical means. The dilemma confronting the Beaver Flat School Division was: **What** do we need to do to provide the best in educational opportunity to our students? Having determined the best solution was to seek amalgamation with another division, the problem then became: **Who** do we want to approach? In turn, having decided to approach the Turnhill School Division and with Turnhill's willingness to entertain the idea of amalgamation, the question was: **How** should we become organized to accomplish the amalgamation?

Realizing that the technical path, though it may not have been addressed as such, included the compilation of information; systematic planning; the provision of resources in the areas of personnel, time, and money; and the opportunity to learn about and understand amalgamation within the context of their school division, the Beaver Flat Board embarked upon an amalgamation process. Their first step, upon the retirement of the preceding director, was to specifically advertise for and hire a .6 Director who would have the experience and know-how to see the division through an amalgamation process.

The Beaver Flat Division then embarked upon an exploration of amalgamation possibilities which included gathering and analysing information from the surrounding school divisions and consulting with their ratepayers through the medium of public meetings. Subsequent to the decision by both Beaver Flat and Turnhill to explore a possible amalgamation, budgetary considerations to cover costs of meetings were implemented by both divisions. A temporary system, the ASC, was put into place, its

members constituting the key personnel in the amalgamation process. The ASC's specific function was to represent stakeholder groups as well as to oversee and assist the amalgamation process. The ASC also served to inform all interested parties with regards to information and what was happening at the various stages of the amalgamation process. Additional support personnel were provided by the Regional and Provincial Education Departments and independent consultants who were retained as required, as was the case in the determination of asset values. Although the ASC operated for a period of approximately two years, opinions of the steering committee and other interested parties varied as to the adequacy of the provision of time to explore, make decisions, and carry out the amalgamation process.

Political Aspects

Constitutionally, there are two levels of government in Canada— federal and provincial. Passage of the British North America Act in 1876 gave provinces full authority to determine educational structure within their boundaries and power to enact laws governing their education system. In turn, school boards have only those powers granted to them by provincial statute. In broad terms, Boards are responsible for the governance of schools within their divisions in accordance with provincial mandates.

All organizations face the problem of allocating power and resources (Tichy, 1982). While the final power in educational decisions rests with the Minister of Education, as elected representatives of the public, the Boards of Education of Turnhill and Beaver Flat had the legislated right to make decisions. In this instance, the Boards of Education had the jurisdiction to decide whether or not to amalgamate and with whom. The boards also had the authority to make decisions as to the process of amalgamation and the management of that process. However, having been elected to administrate the affairs of the school divisions by the public at large and being accountable to its ratepayers, the Beaver Flat Board of Education undertook to compile and share information through the

venue of public meetings. At that point, the Beaver Flat Board made the decision to seek amalgamation with their first partner of choice, the Turnhill School Division.

Subsequent to this decision and to the Turnhill Board indicating their willingness to explore a possible amalgamation, the amalgamation process and its management came under the direction of the joint Boards and Directors of Education. Documentation of the process indicated the decision as to which groups of individuals would be represented on the ASC, as well as the mandate of the steering committee was determined by the Directors, with input from the Boards. This is a clear example of politics at play and the use of power to direct and control the composition of the ASC. Consequently, the composition of the ASC came to include the Directors, Secretary-Treasurers, Board Chairpersons, and Teacher's Association Presidents as well as representatives of the Boards, principals, teachers, and support staff from each of the divisions. The latter group of individuals were nominated to participate in the ASC by their respective members. Also included was a representative from a Beaver Flat First Nations reserve. Representatives from the STF and the SSTA were not invited to sit at the steering committee table.

Conflicts over the divergent and competing interests of stakeholders brought into the fore issues of power and authority. Examples include, as previously discussed, the choice of amalgamation partner, retaining direct representation on the board, Longford's decision to disjoin from the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation, the division of assets and liabilities, and local teacher agreements. Negotiations and compromise were generally resolved through the ASC. The mandate of the ASC was to ascertain the principles of amalgamation. Members of the committee were expected to report back to their committees, to present their group's concerns and suggestions for the resolution of issues, and, as a group, to make recommendations to the Boards. After discussion, the Board(s) made the final decision. Generally, throughout the amalgamation process, this collaborative problem-solving process functioned satisfactorily.

> I think all of the players were involved to some extent. Certainly, they had the opportunity to make recommendations and lay out their concerns for consideration. So I don't think any one group specifically [was key to] moving the process forward. It was a combined effort on the part of everyone. (ST-T: 2, p. 5)

> I was pleased to be part of the umbrella group. We have two teacher reps and an administrative rep from each division. The process is good- open, listening to ideas and concerns, with good info from the divisions and secretary-treasurers as needed. We had enough meetings with time in between for representative groups to meet, both LINC and Executives in teacher organizations, in each division before coming together again. (E-T: 21, p. 3)

> I could keep staff informed, though I don't know if they always felt informed....We all got information at the same time. This was very important so certain people were not privy to information that others did not have. (E-BF: 19, p. 2)

There were, however, dissenting opinions:

> When Longford decided we wanted to go to Ladybank, when we got the petition to the Minister, they [the Boards] never said much but there was a change. And after that there basically was no communication, other than the meeting about assets....Our rep kept sitting in on those meetings but whenever [our rep] brought anything up about Ladybank, the feeling was that ...it was Turnhill we were discussing. (B-BFL: 11, p. 12)

> We were led to believe that teachers are involved in a lot of decision-making, but when the crunch came, the upper level decision makers prevailed; teachers often felt that they were "just a voice in the wilderness." I feel if I am being involved in the process just to appease me, not in sincerity, then don't. (E-BF: 22, p. 3)

Political issues are, by their very nature, conflict-oriented. The interactions and the interplay of the varying and often divergent interests of those involved in the amalgamation process was reflected in the varying degrees of satisfaction as indicated by the research participants.

Cultural Aspects

The cultural perspective encompasses a consideration of the norms, values, beliefs and attitudes of those individuals, groups, or communities involved in the amalgamation process and can be seen to influence the entire amalgamation process. With respect to the management of the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation process, research participants identified those values and beliefs which colored their perception of what happened during the time of amalgamation.

The expressed belief that boards, schools, and communities have a responsibility to provide children with a "good" education was a major factor prompting a commitment to the exploration of amalgamation by both school divisions. Evolving from this belief, participants identified the importance of cooperation and collaboration between school divisions, interest groups, committees, and individuals. When indicating what they valued, participants used words such as good-will, cordial, and genuine.

> I think another critical part of the whole thing was the kind of attitude that Turnhill demonstrated and you could say the same thing about the Ladybank board, in terms of an openness and a welcoming. (SS-BF: 17, p. 11)

Inclusion in the amalgamation process received a high rating. It was the participants' belief that everyone should have the opportunity to access information and to participate in discussions. To some, inclusion was also equated to being treated as equals, rather than as "poor country cousins."

Maintaining a sense of integrity throughout the amalgamation process was deemed to be highly important to all participants. From their perspective, this entailed the accuracy and sharing of *all* information, and a sharing of decisions as they were made. Integrity also implied being up-front with what was happening in the respective divisions during the amalgamation process. This became particularly evident with respect to Beaver Flat's sale of portable classrooms and the purchase of computers as previously discussed.

Integrity inferred fairness to all at all times. It also meant valuing the various cultures or communities, their philosophies and their concerns. From the participants viewpoint, trust in both the process and in the people directly involved in the amalgamation rested on the integrity displayed by the Boards, the Directors, and the ASC. This was certainly the case for the Beaver Flat teacher's community and, again, there were varying viewpoints as to the degree of honesty and integrity brought to the amalgamation process by both their own and the receiving board.

> They had told us that we were *not* going to lose staff, that it was going to stay stable for a couple of years. And all of a sudden, we're forewarned early on in the year that our pupil teacher ratio is not right, it doesn't follow within the formula; and all those words were *sworn* to us. So that created more stress. An area that really, really needs concentrating on is the building of trust between the values, goals and objectives of central office, and the values and goals of the teacher in the classroom and the school itself, because sometimes it's felt that [the goals] are in conflict. (E-BF: *, p. 8)

Other beliefs, values, and attitudes included sensitivity to timing issues, community interests, the history of communities, personal viewpoints, and cultural groups.

> We're seeing that in our teacher negotiations. The history of culture and the establishment of norms, even norms as to ways of negotiating contracts. So now, with the teachers from Beaver Flat on board, they have had a different history of things they've worked on. Now, there's a different flavor in the mix. And again, it works if you keep people focused and you're working on relationships and open to trying to understand. (D-T: 14, pp. 25-26)

The emotional support between individual teachers and staffs was valued, particularly by employees in the Beaver Flat School Division. Finally, the steering committee members and those they represented valued the commitment to shared decision-making and the approach used in the resolution of disputes, namely, the attempt to resolve issues through a discussion and consensus approach.

Participants, commenting on cultural differences between the Beaver Flat and Turnhill communities, believed that while individual communities have cultural differences

based on ethnicity, generally, both divisions were rural. However, participants did recognize that the rural communities surrounding the nearby urban center did not always have the same concerns regarding maintaining the viability of their schools and community as did the more distant communities. For instance, teachers themselves recognized a cultural difference among themselves. Many of the teachers who are employed in communities located in close proximity to the urban center live in the city, while in areas more distant, teachers live in and are a part of the community. In other words, while both divisions are rural, rural can have a different meaning from one place to another. Cultural differences, from a variety of ethnic groups in various communities—Ukranian, Mennonite, First Nations, Catholic, Metis, French, Doukhobor, English, and so on; from "rural" to "urban/rural" communities; from First Nations cultures to the communities situated nearby; and from one First Nation community to another First Nation community can be identified in both divisions. Although each culture or community may have their own discreet values, underpinning these is a collective rural philosophy. However, understanding each culture's diversity was recognized as an important and ongoing issue, particularly in the understanding of First Nation's culture.

> I'm speaking from a First Nations perspective here. It's certainly been a positive change for us. It's still refreshing, when I think the Turnhill Board recognizes that there are differences in philosophy. They accept the fact that we may choose a different approach and it's valid. Previously, it was...a difficult situation where, perhaps, the attitude was not based on acceptance of First Nations philosophies. (B-BF: *, p. 5)

As another example, cultural difference was clearly voiced by the First Nations groups themselves when it came to the suggestion that one Board member represent the three separate First Nations groups on the "new" Board. Each respective group wished to have their own representative; they did not want to be lumped together as one group.

It is apparent that cultural differences existed on a variety of levels. During the amalgamation process and the time immediately following, Beaver Flat teachers have

struggled in their adjustment to new and different cultural groups. One perceptive individual stated:

> There are certainly a lot of concerns on this staff. There has been a good effort by Turnhill to hold out a hand, but we have not always reciprocated. It's important to stop thinking about what's good for us; we need to start focusing on what is good for kids. Much of this [attitude] has resulted from staff personalities. It is important to move into a team mode. We are not individual islands. (E-BF: 19, p. 4)

A school administrator had this comment to make:

> I think the staff has felt that we were add-ons, the "new kids on the Beaver Flat block," not the veterans. The teacher perception, whether it is legitimate or not, has been expressed as "we were the poor cousins." Some very good things have come of the amalgamation; we are on the cutting edge of things, part of change. As well, we have things to share. (E-BF: *, p. 2)

Although integration efforts during the amalgamation process involved the employees of the two divisions through joint meetings, teachers' institutes, and committee representation, participants indicated it is essential that efforts to align school cultures and community continue.

Summary

The strategic management of change requires a return to basic questions about an organization's nature and purpose. Strategic management is keeping the three organizational strands, technical, political, and cultural, aligned both internally and externally. Technically, compiling information, systematic planning, and the provision of resources in the areas of personnel, time, and money provided the Beaver Flat and Turnhill School Divisions with the means to undertake an amalgamation process. Politically, the Boards of Education exercised their power to direct and control which groups would be represented on the ASC, although the selected groups were able to appoint their

representative of choice. The divergent interests of those involved in the amalgamation process was reflected in the varying degrees of satisfaction experienced by the ASC members. Although both divisions are rural in nature, cultural differences do exist. These differences result from factors such as ethnicity, location, community interests, and the varying cultures and sub-cultures present in both individual schools and between the school divisions. Alignment of the mission and strategy, the organizational structure, and human resource management both within and between the technical, political, and cultural areas began in the pre-merger amalgamation phase and continued through and into the post-amalgamation phase. Indeed, efforts at alignment continue to take place.

Question 5

What approaches were used to address human resource concerns during the transition?

In order to address this question, the researcher applied Bridge's (1991) view that while change is situational and external, transition is psychological and internal and, unless transition occurs, change will not work. The change in this case study is the amalgamation of two school divisions into one; the transition is what transpired within the individuals who moved through the amalgamation process. In other words, this question considered how individuals managed the transition in order to prevent the change from becoming unmanageable.

Endings

Dealing with endings is a difficult and emotionally draining process and this was certainly the case for the students, teachers, trustees, Board of Education members and the respective communities in the Beaver Flat School Division. Amalgamation called for an end to a school division that had been in operation for some 50 years. Indeed, as a result

of the Longford decision to split and amalgamate with another division, amalgamation was not only an end to the larger school community, but also the cessation of contacts between people who had, for numerous years, supported each other and worked together. This was particularly the case for two groups of people: the Board of Education/school trustees and teachers within the division. Making the transition meant a loss of what used to be and with that, the loss of a sense of identity. It was also an end to established ways of doing things.

Opinions as to the difficulty of dealing with the end of the division were varied and depended on the perspective one brought to the change. The following quotations illustrate the Beaver Flat viewpoint:

> Our board had run into a factor that I think they hadn't realized was going to be a factor, and that was that all of a sudden they were dealing with something that was no longer sort of abstract, it was becoming very real by the spring [of 1996]. It was like dealing with a death for some of them. (D-BF: 1, p. 24)

> Our culture has been changed,...the familiarity of a place, the environment, the trust, just the speed with which things could be done. I think a lot of people feel there are [after amalgamation] a lot of fish in one big pond and their personal identities have been taken away, [before] with a small number of teachers everybody had a major role to play. (E-BF: 13, p. 18)

> We still talk to people and we still send our kids to shop, and so it's not like a divorce where you don't have any contact with the individual anymore. It's a realization that things change and we move on, but it's not like a grieving process; I don't think that is very accurate. (E-BFL: 10, p. 4)

> I think teachers have been so shell shocked with curriculum change in the last ten years that any kind of change now like the whole amalgamation issue [is] just another change; it's not like meeting a stone wall—like we've done this for 20 years and we aren't going to change.E-BF: 9, p. 9)

On the other hand, individuals within the Turnhill School Division looked at endings from a somewhat different perspective. For the most part, concerns focused on

what was in it for them and how the change would affect their schools in terms of service and support. That is not to say Turnhill was insensitive to the Beaver Flat situation:

> Intellectually, I can empathize with Beaver Flat and their feelings. At one of the meetings, someone [from Beaver Flat] spoke up and expressed a feeling of loss of identity. We did not experience this emotionally. It is important that teachers [from each of the divisions] show consideration and be empathetic toward each other. It is also important that Beaver Flat teachers express these feeling to us. In this way, we can all deal with them at a professional and personal level. (E-T: 21, p. 6)

Individuals and groups chose to deal with the endings in a variety of ways. For some, as the quotes indicated, it was just another change; for others, the realization there was going to be an "end" did not hit home until later in the process; and for some, such as the teacher's group, efforts were made to recognize the end:

> We're very sad. It was part of our family that was leaving. We all cried. We had a banquet, a farewell. You know, we'd been together for a long, long time and that's sad. (E-BF: 13, p.19)

> It is kind of sad. Longford went in their own direction, they were left hanging and sometimes felt directionless. (E-BF: 22, p. 3)

The Turnhill Division chose to recognize the "ending" of the Beaver Flat Division through school visits and the presentation of plaques on the opening day of the new division.

> I think there's some ceremony around [the closing of a school division]. In people's minds it's like a funeral; they are there for a reason, aren't they? You say good-bye; you bring closure. Some of the Board members are now saying that the actual closing out of the system, like the last few days when they had their last board meeting and right before Christmas when they had their last Christmas performance, was like the end of something and the beginning of something new. But I don't think [everyone in Beaver Flat] attended to the closure in their system and I see that as a real void....What we're going to do is collect memorabilia from the school system and display it under plexiglass in the Falkland high school, so there's a history of the school division, that it did exist. (D-T: 14, pp.9-10)

Albeit one needs to end some thing before one can begin anew, there is usually a time between these two stages during which organizations, as well as the individuals within them, move through what has been described as "the muddle in the middle." Bridges (1986) defined this time as the "neutral zone."

The Neutral Zone

The Beaver Flat participants in the research study found this period of organizational transition to be a particularly trying time. Earmarked by disorientation and disintegration, individuals and groups were thinking about what they perceived as problems and trying to reduce the complexities of the amalgamation to a few key issues. Individuals recognized that this was a difficult time.

> When I look at the staff, I see the staff almost just kind of floating around right now... All of a sudden you're into a new division and you don't feel that comfortable going back to your people over there and you just don't know who to go to over here....Are they going to think I don't know anything if I phone somebody [in Turnhill]? So [the staff] is kind of drifting and they're looking for those connections. (E-BF: 9, pp. 5-6)

> Teacher perception, whether it is legitimate or not, has been expressed as "we *were* the poor cousins." On the surface, the amalgamation has been sincere and smooth and Turnhill felt that they had done everything. But, the sheer size of it: the decentralization, teachers wanted answers to questions such as why? How do we? As a principal, it has been frustrating to people on both sides of the equation, Turnhill did not understand why we were asking about procedures and things. [While] the policy is there, it is the unwritten procedures, the interpretation of the policies that has been very frustrating for the teachers and myself. (E-BF: *, pp. 2-3)

It was during this transition period that, from the perspective of the Beaver Flat teachers, their professionalism was being put into question. Although they recognized they were from a "smaller"division, they prided themselves on their high degree of professionalism and involvement in activities such as provincial pilot projects.

> In Beaver Flat, teachers have suddenly felt their professionalism being questioned. For example, as it came close to amalgamation, teachers were requested to send in information re teaching certificate, classes taken, degree, and level on pay scale when the information is already on record and available to Turnhill....I've heard there is one pilot site per division in new programs; we would like to continue work in that area but our opportunities to do that in the larger division may be curtailed....Sometimes the feeling of "daring to question how things are done" is there. (E-BF: 22, p. 2)

> A lot of us felt, and I'll speak in the plural here, that the general consensus was [Turnhill] was rescuing us, that we were this little division with not much going for it, and this was a rescue job. Maybe a rescue from the point of view of assessment roles and funding...but *not* from the point of view of the professionalism of teachers and their expertise....The personal contact we had with the division office is really lacking because now we have umpteen forms to fill out. And the spontaneous types of things you could do for kids are no longer there....Somebody told me once that, go ahead and do it and then beg forgiveness. And that's not the way I operate and a lot of the staff have expressed the same concern. (E-BF: *, pp. 1-2)

> If you don't know what is going on in a division, how do you connect? Professionalism has always been there, in the internal groups in Beaver Flat. It takes time to work this out when you're part of a different organization. Perhaps it's a matter of perception, how we look at things, how they do, and how we feel Turnhill is perceiving us. It's something like the elephant and the mouse. How much is reality, how much is perception? Once our teachers were on various committees with the Turnhill people, teachers were feeling more competent within their roles. (E-BF: 23, pp. 4-5)

In the course of dealing with multiple changes, personal viewpoints which were not always positive had a considerable effect on the morale of Beaver Flat teachers.

> Concerns regarding being "the poor sister" were sometimes expressed. [We've experienced] school administrators who were reluctant to give up insider-power, having been basically left alone for the previous three years as regarding any school decisions, although this has been partly due to having little opportunity to meet with other administrators and share ideas, the professional development funding being very low. As a result of this negative attitude at the beginning of [amalgamation] talks, including derogatory remarks in the staff room, it has been a problem for those in favor of

> amalgamation....In fact, as a result we, the staff, are *not* doing well. (E-BF: *, p. 2)

Both the Beaver Flat Board and their staff, particularly the teachers, experienced this transition time but not always in a painful fashion. It was also a time of making new contacts, becoming more comfortable with the up-coming change, and looking forward to new opportunities, additional support, and a broadening of horizons. The Turnhill Division displayed a sensitivity to the Beaver Flat situation. Although the amalgamation did not occur until January 1, 1997, on opening day in the fall of 1996, all staff from both divisions took part in a joint in-service day. Various committees included representation from Beaver Flat staff, school and in-service days were coordinated, and the Turnhill Director was visible in the Falkland and Spence schools on numerous occasions.

Beginnings

The ending of organizational transition is marked by a new beginning and the emergence of a new or renewed mission. New beginnings were largely a reflection or continuation of activities initiated during the neutral zone. One teacher described it in this manner:

> There are new opportunities for us now. Previously, we never saw [our Director]. We had nowhere to go if we had problems. Having access to only one person's view or opinion leads to an insular attitude and division on a staff. I hope that through the new administration and the access to consultants, dealing with them with honesty and integrity, we can look more out than in, look at the bigger picture. (E-BF: 19, p. 3)

First and foremost was attending to the details of the present, the adjusting to new ways of doing things. Changes were not as perceptible for parents and students—life and school appeared to follow its customary routine. This was not the case for board members, trustees, teachers, and support staff. For Beaver Flat board members, trustees, and school administrators, new beginnings translated into adjusting to new procedures,

familiarizing themselves with the history of Turnhill, as well as sharing their own background and gaining an understanding of the "how" and "why" of procedures.

> The expectations are different, the size is different, so some of the consequences are different too. A transfer's very realistic here, where it wasn't something that was going to happen in Beaver Flat. So there's some apprehension about this change, now that it's filtering down, affects the teachers. Because it really just hit the office staff and maybe administration, more than it hit teachers initially. We've only been amalgamated for six months, but I see that changing as of this September for lots of teachers....So many things are the after-consequences of amalgamation....I think once you go through a full year it will be more comfortable. I guess one way we felt it directly was on the Turnhill Administrative Council, they had as many administrators as we had teachers in Beaver Flat. So when we went to our first meeting, we looked around and it was unbelievable, but you feel you are a part of a team with the other administrators....So there are different levels that just were not there within the Beaver Flat School Division....from my perspective, I like the support because then I know, I don't feel like I'm doing this by myself....As a principal...I just did not know all the K-6 curriculum and really, I didn't have the time to do [in-service]. So it felt like one of those weights on top of you that you really couldn't do a lot about, where now I have somebody I can phone and say, "These people need some help implementing Social one to five, we need an in-service," and that person will be there, that's their job. (E-BF: *, p. 6-7)

On the opposite side of the coin, the Turnhill Boards were making similar adjustments. With the increase of Board size from eight to eleven members, discussions became more cumbersome, the Board was still moving through a "we" and "them" to a "us" perspective. As a result of amalgamation, central office staff was feeling the "drain and strain on resources" (ST-T: 2, p. 2):

> The amalgamation has not seen an increase in services to the original Turnhill students, but rather an increase in full services to those in Beaver Flat, speech pathologists, counseling, and so on. In time, there may likely be a need for an increase in central office staffing. (B-T: 16, p. 3)

> Well, we've gone through some other things here in the office. We're losing one senior administrative position and then one of our coordinators was out for surgery. So that really crimped us here, even under normal circumstances that would have been difficult. Given the whole thing together, it was

> extremely challenging, just having the strength to go 14, 16 hours a day. There just wasn't enough time to get it done. And, of course, when you do get home, it doesn't go away. You're still just vibrating. So it took its toll and we're all very tired. (D-T: 14, p. 12)

> Our Board is getting so large the meetings are very, very long because with everybody and with the new members, it is different....Now, we have an election in the fall and so we could have more new people....So when you get elections and you get new people [on the Board], often those people have been culturated at the district level....But sometimes when you're talking about system decisions, it's not the [individual] community. It's the larger picture. Now, the [Board members] can go back and get the opinions of their ratepayers, but those local opinions can't drive the school system, [although] they're part of the decision-making, you take all factors into consideration. (T: *, pp. 23-25)

Along with the redefinition of various roles from school administrators to Board members and school trustees, the Beaver Flat communities were also adjusting to the new division. Developing trust between both divisions was an ongoing process. A case in point was the learning experience transpiring between the Eagle First Nations groups and the Turnhill Board.

> I'm speaking from a First Nation's perspective here. It's certainly been a positive change for us. Its still refreshing, when I think the Turnhill division board recognizes there are differences in philosophy. They accept that we may choose a different approach and it's valid. Previously, it was very, very difficult....It was an attitude that sometimes made things difficult....There were times, there were battles where I would come home and I would just rant and rave....So, it was refreshing , it *is* refreshing to sit at that board and they're willing to listen....You're making sure the district board knows certain things so that they can do a more informed, hands on role, in their schools. (B-BF: *, pp. 5-9)

Along with the many "new beginnings" being experienced by a variety of individuals in an assortment of ways, numerous individuals identified a need for ongoing communication and the discussion of amalgamation issues. It was their perception, that while the amalgamation process was underway, consultation with and information to the various groups was generally satisfactory. However, in the first six months of the post-

amalgamation period, the perception was that there was little, if any, communication and ongoing consultation with amalgamation concerns.

> I think there needs to be a summary of what has occurred, even for the community-at-large, not only the teachers, but parents and community. This is what is going on now. This is how we're serving you. These are the changes. Because people would like to know, rather that things coming through the grapevine, coffee row and so on. We don't want to be contradicting what may actually be happening....And I suggest perhaps that the division should put out a newsletter and it could be sent through the school, but not something the principals write out, the division needs to take this responsibility and tell everybody about staff changes and services. I think, to maintain good public relations, you need to have that communication. Communication's very, very important. (E-BF: 13, pp. 12-13)

> Administration is easier now, but if we are asked for an opinion, we want to feel that we can share, honestly and openly. This is a trust that needs developing. Part of the problem has been feeling subsumed. Teachers have expressed this thought, the perception of our teachers that we are not a significant component of the Turnhill organization. (E-BF: 23, p. 4)

The blending of two cultures into one, even when their work is similar, does not occur without a considerable amount of attention and effort on the part of both parties. Issues of culture are closely related to the transition experience.

Summary

The case study participants clearly identified the need to address human resource concerns during times of transition. In order to prevent change from becoming unmanageable individuals must acknowledge they are in a state of transition and that not everyone is at the same stage at the same time. Understanding the stages of transition—endings, the neutral zone, and beginnings and recognizing there is value in allowing oneself to experience the transition process serves to validate the experience. It also allows individuals to see both the positive and negatives of the change. The need for post-

amalgamation communication and the continued discussion of amalgamation issues and concerns is a point well taken. The amalgamation may be an accomplished fact but the transition process, a second-order change, continues to evolve.

Question 6

What has school division amalgamation come to mean to the stakeholder groups?

By the end of the school division amalgamation process and some six months into the operation of the "new" division, amalgamation had come to mean a variety of things to those involved in the process, be it individuals, or part of a community, school, or interest group. At different points in time during the amalgamation process, amalgamation came to mean a time of frustration with too many things to deal with, too short a time to do them in, and too much to do for those individuals directly involved in the process. In response to the comment by an ASC member, "I wish that I'd never heard of the word 'amalgamation,' " another ASC member had this to say:

> Well, I think there may be folks that wish they'd never heard the word, and they could well be people who have been elected to the Turnhill Board. As a matter of fact, I've talked to at least one member who had been on the Beaver Flat Board and then was elected to the Turnhill Board who thought, "You know, now I'm driving that much further to meetings, the meetings are at a different time of day." I mean, there are a whole number of changes that you know are going to come, but you really can't deal with them until after the fact. There is the whole question of how you move into a new policy framework, a new way of doing things. You recognize that you might have liked what you did before, but you're in a larger organization and you're not as big in that organization as you were in the smaller one. Those are very real factors that people will have to grapple with and that's part of what change is all about. (D-BF: 1, p. 7)

For the Beaver Flat School Division, amalgamation came to mean improved educational opportunities for students and the provision of support services to meet curriculum and special needs within their schools. It came to mean retaining schools

already in operation and thus, eliminating the threat of further school closures. Amalgamation also came to mean retaining direct representation on Boards of Education by each school subdivision.

To the Longford community, amalgamation has come to mean exercising their right to belong to the school division of their choice, and, as a result, safeguarding the viability of their community through the preservation of a K-12 school and direct representation on the Board of Education. It has come to mean belonging to a "rural" school division and maintaining or even reducing the school mill rate. Amalgamation has also come to mean an even greater degree of change for, having joined the Ladybank Division, Longford found themselves in the midst of yet another amalgamation and the very real possibility of losing direct representation due to a ward system of electing board members.

> I think this amalgamation [Longford with Ladybank] has gone relatively smoothly. The teachers involved with it felt that they really had a part in what was going to happen. I'm not so sure that with the new [second] amalgamation teachers are feeling the same sense of comfort. Like it's gone just a little bit too quickly....I don't think there's really anybody around here that doesn't think the amalgamation is going to be good. People are generally happy with what's happening and I think it helps letting people know what is going on so that they feel they have a part in it. It's sure nice to think that we are part of it and not just being forced. (E-BFL: 9, pp. 11-13)

Longford residents experienced a number of losses—the loss of ties to the larger Beaver Flat Division, the loss of the support and collegiality of teachers who had worked together for many years and who were now affected by the division split, and the loss of independence. Amalgamation also came to mean feelings of acrimony between board members of the Beaver Flat Division, feelings of acrimony between the town of Longford and the surrounding community and the Beaver Flat Boards, as well as disharmony between Longford area ratepayers who did not necessarily agree with the end decision to amalgamate with Ladybank. The researcher's perception was that while the external

amalgamation process moved along comparatively easily, discussions and issues addressed internally on the Beaver Flat board were not without elements of disagreement and difficulty.

With the exception of disharmony within the Beaver Flat Division, the feelings as discussed in the previous paragraph were mirrored, to a large extent, by the schools and communities who became part of the "new" Turnhill School Division. Both parents and students were pleased with the additional opportunities and services now available to them; the towns would retain their schools and mill rates would not skyrocket. For the support staff, amalgamation came to mean continued job security and increased wages. Losses resulting from amalgamation included the loss of a division office and the provision of banking services, the end to their division, and the loss of the Longford students and teachers. To some individuals, amalgamation came to mean dealing with a larger, more unresponsive and cumbersome system, while to others it meant new opportunities for students and teachers. For Beaver Flat Board members, trustees, in-school administrators, and teachers, amalgamation came to mean learning about and adjusting to new procedures in all areas of school and administration. Amalgamation came to mean increased travel time to meetings of any sort, changed roles for local school trustees, and adjusting to being part of a vastly increased school division.

> It will take a year or two for it to settle down. It's a process, for everyone to become comfortable and to be an equal partner, rather than an "we" and "them" situation. When we talk about how "you" or "we" do it, we feel like an outsider. The board does treat us as equals, although we are not as involved in a day to day decision-making process as we were in the smaller decisions. The cumbersome part is people's feelings, the different personnel that one has to deal with, where people are at a particular time and working through issues. (B-BF: 15, p. 4)

In view of the fact that budgets are more decentralized within the Turnhill Division, for local school trustees, amalgamation has come to mean a change in their

administrative responsibilities. Local boards are experiencing increased communication with the Board and adjusting to a more open process between the two groups.

> Now [local boards] are given a chunk of money that they can then use...to do things around the school. They work together with the principals and then they decide if they really need it and if they have the money for it. The [trustees] have a dimension they've never had before. Like our local boards look after all the bus routes, the bus drivers,...the janitorial and secretarial staff, as far as hiring and looking after any questions other than what the principal deals with. And also, the general adaptive component of the curriculum, they look after that in a large part too. (B-T: 4, p. 3)

> In the long run, decentralization is beneficial, all stakeholders in education are beginning to realize that we all have responsibilities and some decision-making capacity, some role to play. So, if everyone understands the roles, the operation runs more smoothly. It's beneficial for the Division Board to have a role to play and understand what their roll is, as well as for the local boards. If they are being given more decision-making in local issues and concerns, local boards need to know this. They also need an orientation....We all need to know these roles so we can work comfortably and have dignity and respect in those areas. (E-BF: 23, pp. 4-5)

To Beaver Flat teachers, amalgamation has come to mean a degree of increased support, the visibility of office personnel within their schools, and ready response to any questions or concerns. Amalgamation has also come to mean frustration as staff continue to struggle in their adjustment to many changes, particularly with regard to procedures, perceptions of being a "little fish in a big pond," changes in workload, working with division consultants and the blending of a rural school culture with the rural/urban culture in the larger school division. For teachers in the Beaver Flat schools, amalgamation has come to mean both benefit and loss. Benefits include increased support, school administrators meetings, and a sense of security and stability as to jobs and school permanence. On the other side of the coin, amalgamation has come to mean the loss of preparation time for individuals, time for one-on-one core planning, and a perceived drop in the quality of teacher work life. "I think the teachers gave all of their support for

amalgamation because of the perception that their quality of work load and work life would be better, so that's a real disappointment (E-BF: *, p. 6). Teachers are still grappling with feelings of isolation and loss of identity.

> If I were to do it [amalgamation] again, I would recommend paying more attention to getting the schools on board and after the amalgamation, to follow up in coordinating activities and in coming together as a group, particularly in teacher areas. I would recommend using some professional development days to touch base with teachers in the division who have similar interests and teaching assignments. (E-T: 21, pp. 5-6)

"We have just touched the tip of the iceberg," was the comment of one staff member when speaking about learning about the new organization.

To the Turnhill Central Office staff, amalgamation has meant a tremendous initial increase in workload, some related to the amalgamation itself, some related to bringing the new schools and staffs on-line, and some related to providing services to an additional number of students and schools, all without an increase in support staff personnel.

> From the administrative perspective [one thing] that surprised us...was the workload that the two extra schools would bring. Everybody here has been working at top speed just to keep on top of everything and really struggling to some extent to maintain services. We're hoping as the process develops that will fall away....[Amalgamation] created a lot of extra work and time because you had to be there. You still have to be there almost constantly to nurture and bring them along. (ST-T: 2, p. 10)

To the receiving Board of Education, amalgamation has come to mean dealing with a more unwieldy Board—in terms of numbers and increased length of discussions, the need for ongoing adjustments, getting to know each other and designing new ways of working together.

> We're all learning and growing from the experience. I think it's changed the board a bit, having people with different ideas and that's not always altogether bad either. We've had a very good board and it's still a good board. But to say, "OK, you people now will join," and that's all there is to it, is not the case. You're going to have more problems, I think. You're going to get less agreement on anything. (B-T: 4, p. 16)

In addition, the Board is also working with the two new district boards to bring them on-line as to procedures and responsibilities. Amalgamation has led to a concern that their "original" Turnhill students continue to receive the same level of support as they had pre amalgamation. To Turnhill schools and staffs, amalgamation has, to this point, meant little change, although teachers have commented on seeing less of their director and consultants, particularly in the first months following the amalgamation.

To the Beaver Flat support staff, amalgamation has come to mean having an avenue for negotiation on issues of concern. For some it has meant an opportunity to talk about their work and share ideas, where previously, they frequently worked in isolation.

> The post amalgamation process for para-professionals has been helpful with changes and support for changes. A major effort was made in August [1996], we had a common day with everyone included. This leads to cohesion. (SS-BF: 17, p.2)

For the Director hired by Beaver Flat to oversee the amalgamation process, there is the satisfaction of having fulfilled the mandate he was given when hired. While he was cognizant of the emotions of the amalgamation, he recognized that not being part of the community made it easier for him, in some respects, to deal with amalgamation issues.

> I wouldn't have to get involved in the coffee row politics because I could drive in there in the morning and I could drive out in the afternoon....I didn't have the baggage of the history and all of the problems. Now in some ways, it's helpful to know that there was a war that went on 35 years ago between this community and that community over a hockey game and it's still festering. But I could be a little more objective about what was happening. (D-BF: 1, pp. 26-27)

Working through this particular amalgamation has only served to reinforce his opinion regarding school division amalgamations in general:

> I feel more strongly than ever the need for [amalgamation] to happen. We have to keep in mind that the boundaries that separate school divisions today were established over 50 years ago, during a time and with circumstances that were far different than what's there today. Trading patterns have changed; I mean everything has changed. The enrollments in rural Saskatchewan have

> declined. There isn't a need for schools every seven miles, anymore than there is a need for elevators every seven miles. (D-BF: 1, p. 27)

From a personal standpoint, there was, yet again, a whole gamut of responses ranging from the positive to the negative. A Turnhill central office individual responded in this way:

> I support change and I don't know if there is another easy way to do it [amalgamate] constructively. You're either with it or against it, there's no halfway. From my perspective, if the board was to say tomorrow, "Get out there and see where we can go next," I would be excited to do that. I'm not talking for myself necessarily, but everyone here [in central office] is so supportive and excited about it. I don't know that others share that same enthusiasm right now, but I think given a chance to look at another opportunity like that, I think they would be supportive. The direct services to children is what's important and certainly, we've been able to provide that. And I think the board has plans to continue that. (ST-T: 2, pp.16-17)

A STF official reflected on his perspective of the amalgamation:

> The teachers were involved in a meaningful way. They had voice, they had opportunity to consult with their own members, as did other groups, and there was a shared ownership for what went on there. So, you know, while in hindsight they may have done some things differently from what they had done, I think, based on the models they had to follow, they did a very good job. I'm very pleased with that amalgamation; I think it's the one so far that clearly is the best example. Again, I come back to the basic criteria for reorganization: I think school divisions should work towards a full service school division so they have sufficient number of students, sufficient tax base, sufficient resources, and sufficient consultative services to be able to meet the needs of the vast majority of the kids within the school division. (F: 6, p.4)

As voiced in the previous quotation, it is important to keep in mind that the basic criteria for reorganization should be to work towards a full service school division which is focused on providing children with the best possible educational opportunities.

Summary

The concept of school division amalgamation has come to mean a variety of things to the various stakeholder groups. To a great extent, individual and stakeholder group viewpoints are a result of the location of each individual. Paradoxically, amalgamation has come to mean both losses and gains, the death of a division and the survival of its schools, and the loss of collegial contacts and new opportunities for professional development and friendships. The meanings attributed to the school division amalgamation depended on whether the individual lived in Longford, the Beaver Flat Division or the Turnhill Division. However, regardless of location, to many of the individuals involved in the amalgamation process, amalgamation has given them an increased understanding and appreciation of the complexities of collaboration and joint problem-solving. The amalgamation process has reinforced the importance of honesty and integrity throughout the management of any change process, no matter which side of the fence one was sitting on or what was the particular lens one was looking through.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter 6 provides an overview of the study. The chapter commences with a statement of the research purpose and observations on the methodology. The findings are then discussed with respect to the research questions and the literature review. The chapter concludes with implications for practice, research, and theory.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyse, within the context of organizational theory, the process and management of school division amalgamations. Focusing on mergers and transitions and the management of change, the process of amalgamation and the management of that process were examined and provided a foundation to develop a broader understanding of the complexities and dynamics inherent in school division amalgamations. The primary question for investigation in the case study was: ***With attention to the technical, political and cultural aspects of change management, how did the process of amalgamation unfold and what meaning was ascribed by the participants to the process?***

Methodology

The researcher, engaged in a process of qualitative inquiry, attended to the stories of the research participants. Through this procedure, the researcher came to understand and interpret how the participants viewed the process of amalgamation and the management of that process as it occurred between two school divisions. The study was conducted with participants from two rural Saskatchewan school divisions which were in the midst of amalgamation discussions. Using a combination of stratified purposeful and

snowball sampling, the researcher identified individuals and groups who participated in or were affected by the amalgamation process. Twenty-three individuals and two focus groups which consisted of seven and five Grade Ten, Eleven, and Twelve students respectively, represented the major stakeholder groups participating in semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B). In addition, the researcher attended ASC meetings, met with stakeholder groups and/or their representatives, and reviewed supporting documentation which primarily consisted of the amalgamation binders as compiled by the respective Directors.

Using different lenses—those of the participants, to view the same phenomenon, the researcher, concerned primarily with process and interested in meaning, was able to reconstruct the amalgamation process through inductive data analysis (Merriam, 1988, 1998).

The use of a case study format was appropriate for the investigation of this particular event which was unique within the context of the restructuring of three school divisions into two (Yin, 1994). Acknowledging that all qualitative research is prone to biases resulting from the interaction and value differences between researcher and subjects (Borg & Gall, 1989; Gall et al., 1996), the researcher established the validity, credibility, and trustworthiness of the study through the use of multiple data sources and triangulation. Semi-structured interviews provided both consistency of questions and the opportunity to probe more deeply in order to obtain complete information (Borg & Gall).

In order to transform the qualitative data, the researcher selected details relevant to the study's purpose to provide for a "thick" description of the amalgamation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and then analysed the data by charting responses for each question according to categories of participant groups and recurring replies. This inductive method of analysis allowed for the identification of potential themes, questions, and emerging theories and assisted in the organization of the data both categorically and chronologically (Merriam, 1998; Wolcott, 1994).

An audit trail was developed through the collection of raw data—the interview transcripts, the data reduction and analysis charts, and the reconstruction and synthesis product—the dissertation itself. This audit trail ascertains that the findings of the study were grounded in the data. Examination of the product by the research advisor served to establish the confirmability and dependability of the inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Owens, 1982). Artifacts which testify to the development of the audit trail are housed with the research advisor, Dr. Vivian Hajnal.

Ethical considerations included obtaining permission from the school divisions to conduct the research, informing participants of the nature of the research, and providing them with the opportunity to verify the interview transcripts. Confidentiality and anonymity has been provided to the greatest degree possible within the case study. Given the complexity and idiosyncrasy of the case, individuals may be identifiable, at least to those within the case study. It is for this reason that the interview number has been omitted from many of the quotes.

Discussion of Findings

The findings and discussion are addressed through the questions which guided the case study. While the researcher cannot generalize the findings to other school division amalgamations, it is hoped that readers will be able to apply the findings to their own school division amalgamation, should it occur.

Question 1

Why did amalgamation become an issue in the school divisions?

In Saskatchewan, educational governance reform is manifesting itself in the further consolidation or amalgamation of school divisions, the underlying assumption being that school divisions should be large enough with enough students and sufficient tax base to provide students and staff with a full range of services. Influenced by both the changing

and stable contextual parameters within Saskatchewan and a meeting of the problem, policy, and political streams of the provincial government (Kingdon, cited in Sabatier, 1991), Saskatchewan is currently experiencing a window of opportunity in the area of educational governance reform.

Given that organizations, school divisions included, are inherently self-perpetuating and resistant to change and that the people within these school divisions are emotionally as well as intellectually attached to their school division and have been for many years (Kuhn, 1970), acceptance of a contradictory framework, namely, the disestablishment of the Beaver Flat school division, the subsequent disjoining of their subdivisions, and amalgamation with adjoining school divisions was "inherently wrenching and difficult" (Nevis et al., 1996, p.11).

Amalgamation became an issue in the Beaver Flat School Division primarily as a result of declining enrollments. This steady decline in student numbers had already resulted in school closures, teacher reductions, the loss of support services, and central office administrative cuts. Additional pressures stemmed from several years of cuts in the provincial funding of education coupled with the escalation of education costs in general. A recent trend for First Nations Reserves to build and operate their own schools had led to a further sharp reduction in Beaver Flat's student numbers. Moreover, parents, board members, and teachers were concerned with maintaining the quality of educational programming and finding a resolution to the uncertainties they had faced for a number of years. Given the options of further centralization, maintaining the status quo with a large increase in the mill rate or amalgamation, the Beaver Flat school division chose to initiate a search for an amalgamation partner. After considerable investigation of the surrounding school divisions, the Beaver Flat Board passed a motion to approach the Turnhill School Division.

An application of Levy's (1986) categorization of permitting, enabling, precipitating, and triggering conditions as driving forces for educational governance restructuring can be made as to why amalgamation had become an issue to the Beaver Flat and Turnhill School Divisions (see Table 3). In the area of *permitting conditions*, there was a readiness and willingness of the communities within the Beaver Flat division to endure the anxiety and anticipated uncertainty that amalgamation would bring. Indeed, the hope was that this anxiety would be short term and that the end result would offer, in the long run, a degree of stability and security to their schools and communities. The availability of resources such as provincial personnel to assist in the amalgamation and funding to assist in costs further facilitated the amalgamation. The Beaver Flat Board and Director were prepared to pursue the vision of ensuring and providing for the educational needs of their students; they were committed to the realization of that vision and capable of mobilizing the necessary energy and commitment to the amalgamation process. *Enabling conditions* included a perceived threat to the survival of the Beaver Flat School Division. Indeed, the degree of threat to the school division's ability to survive, given their economic situation and the ever increasing incongruence between the education Beaver Flat was providing and the needs of students and staff in terms of support, had reached a critical stage. Within the Beaver Flat Division, the three remaining schools and their communities viewed amalgamation as a means to maintaining the schools while, at the same time, providing a full range of services for students and teachers. *Precipitating conditions* for Beaver Flat included declines in student population, the opportunity to select their own amalgamation partner, and the emergence of new unmet needs, particularly in the area of special education. The growing emphasis on inclusion for special needs students, without the required resources and support, concerned teachers and parents. The move to amalgamation was also precipitated by the provincial government's position on and pressure to further consolidate school divisions. In addition,

Table 3

Why Amalgamation Became an Issue

REASONS: Beaver Flat S. D.	LEVY'S DRIVING FORCES FOR EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE RESTRUCTURING	REASONS: Turnhill S. D.
.**readiness/willingness** re anxiety/uncertainty .**resources**: provincial personnel/some funding .**declining enrolments**: school closures; teacher cuts; loss of support services; central office administrative cuts; escalation of education costs; cuts in provincial grants; First Nations building schools; maintaining quality of educational programs; years of uncertainty	**PERMITTING CONDITIONS**	.**capable of expanding the division**: mobilizing energy and commitment to this vision
.**perceived threat** to survival of school division .amalgamation would **maintain** schools, provide full range of services	**ENABLING CONDITIONS**	.a degree of **tolerance toward change** .able to **accommodate** more students and staff
.**declines** in student population .**own selection of amalgamation partner**, timing, process, retain direct representation .**new, unmet needs**: special needs students; inclusion; needed support .**government pressure** to amalgamate .**pressures to retain the schools** in the division	**PRECIPITATING CONDITIONS**	.seen as **complying with government directives** re amalgamation .**response to student needs** on a provincial/global perspective
.diminishing **education grants** .building of **First Nations schools** .**decline** in student numbers .diminishing **farm income**	**TRIGGERING EVENTS**	.the **request by Beaver Flat** to entertain the concept of amalgamation

given the tendency of organizations to grow quantitatively and qualitatively (Levy, 1986), as well as pressures to retain schools within the division, Beaver Flat was prepared to address the crisis at hand.

Triggering events included diminishing education grants, the sudden decrease in student population due to a First Nations Reserve opening their own school, the continued decline in rural students and diminished farm income which made increased mill rates an unpopular option. Under these circumstances, Beaver Flat was content with the opportunity to negotiate with the amalgamation partner of choice and to be in control of the management of the amalgamation process.

Under the leadership of their Director and Board, Turnhill had the capabilities of entertaining the vision of an expanded school division, aligning their members with the vision, and mobilizing the energy and commitment needed to attain the realization of the vision. In addition to these *permitting* conditions, Turnhill, being a large rural school division, had a degree of tolerance for change within their system, thus enabling them to accommodate increased numbers of students and staff. With regard to *precipitating* conditions, Turnhill was, through the amalgamation with Beaver Flat, able to comply with government directives to consider amalgamation. The decision to explore amalgamation was not the result of a crisis but rather a response to student needs which they believed they could serve without undue interruption to their own school division. Given its already large population of over 4,000 students, the Turnhill School Division was not in the market for an amalgamation partner of any great size; Turnhill was not contemplating any exploration of possible amalgamations with other large and adjoining school divisions. For Turnhill, the *triggering* event was the request by Beaver Flat to enter into discussions to explore the possibility of an amalgamation of the two school divisions.

The situation in Beaver Flat at the time of the amalgamation was not unique to time and place. As in other parts of the province, enrollments in this rural school division were declining while costs of operating the schools were increasing, provincial grants to education were decreasing, and taxpayer resistance to growing mill rates was on the rise. Parent, pupil and teacher expectations for education were rapidly changing. Without amalgamation, the Beaver Flat School Division could expect to continue to experience or

face increased risks in areas such as increased taxation to maintain basic programs, the loss of teachers with specialized training, the elimination of some programs and services, the loss of teacher efficacy, and a mandated amalgamation under externally imposed conditions. Benefits of amalgamation with Turnhill provided the potential to hold the line on or at least minimize increased mill rates, retain basic programs and services, and maintain and increase educational opportunities for all children. In addition, amalgamation, at that time, allowed Beaver Flat to select partners, the conditions, and the timing of the process as well as to continue to have direct representation on the Board of Education and to retain their schools. There is no denying that these conditions continue to exert pressures on education systems throughout the province, particularly in light of amalgamations which have occurred subsequent to the time of this study.

The amalgamation of the Turnhill and Beaver Flat School Divisions is an obvious example of strategic fit (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). The divisions are governed by the same legislation and share the same vision of educating children. Organizational fit between the two divisions is apparent in that numerous committees in each division address issues of common concern. However, it is the integration strategies which are oriented to a blending of the committee operations, particularly on the human side of the amalgamation, which are crucial to the success of the new division.

Question 2

How did the process of amalgamation unfold?

A detailed description of the amalgamation process was presented in the findings of the case study as well as in the Chronology of the Turnhill/Beaver Flat Amalgamation Process (see Appendix F). A brief summary of the process will be followed by comments on the document, Principles of Amalgamation, and a discussion of the process with reference to the literature on business M & A's and educational governance restructuring.

Numerous years of addressing educational challenges on a local level had, for Beaver Flat, resulted in the centralization of schools and administrative services, teacher, administration and service cutbacks, amalgamation explorations with adjacent school divisions, and a study of an amalgamation possibility. Consultation with their electorate through public meetings resulted in a consensus decision to further explore amalgamation possibilities. Information was collected from the surrounding school divisions and shared with the public. Having received general support to approach Turnhill regarding amalgamation, the Beaver Flat Board approached Turnhill and an amalgamation process was undertaken. Key to the process was the formation of an interim transition team, the Amalgamation Steering Committee, with representation from stakeholder groups. Aspects of collaborative problem-solving served to shape the direction and actions of the ASC and negotiations between the Boards and stakeholder groups as they addressed amalgamation issues (see Appendix J for a listing of identified issues). The development of the Principles of Amalgamation document (see Appendix H) served to give direction to the process. Both internal and external expertise provided support to the process, and upon resolution of the various issues, the amalgamation became a reality on January 1, 1997.

As stated in the previous chapter, the value of the document, *Principles of Amalgamation*, lay in the fact that it established the parameters within which the amalgamation process would transpire. The recognition that the central purpose of amalgamation was to provide the best educational services to all students became a pivotal theme around which all amalgamation decisions and actions revolved. The wording of the second principle, that the areas being amalgamated with the existing Turnhill School Division include the Falkland and Spence school districts from the existing Beaver Flat School Division, could be viewed as a clearly indicated value premise, namely, that the amalgamation was perceived as a take-over/ rescue operation. The Turnhill School division would continue to exist, the Beaver Flat Division would be disestablished and be incorporated into and swallowed up by the Turnhill Division. The Turnhill Division was

neither expecting or prepared to undergo any major disruption of their *modus operandi*. The following quotes support this analysis:

> A new name for the division? In our situation, no. It was always going to be Turnhill. They were just joining Turnhill as opposed to making a new division. But in the situation where you've got three or four school divisions dissolving and becoming a new one, then I think that is quite different. I don't know if our [amalgamation] was a rescue. It might be, a little bit, because Beaver Flat was at the brink of going down. I think initially, it was probably looked at as more of a rescue, but [the process] was a *very* collaborative approach. (B-T: 4, p. 14)

> There wasn't a whole lot that could go wrong. It was a pretty neat package....It's different from the perspective of whether you're amalgamating or annexing. In our situation, it wasn't an amalgamation as much as it was an annexation or transfer. (ST-T: 2, p.11)

In the turbulent and complicated world we are a part of, organizational change continues to pose a challenge to educational governance reform. As described by Levy (1986), the decision to amalgamate was a deliberate, purposeful, and explicit decision, which involved both external guidance in the form of regional and provincial personnel from the Department of Education, as well as internal guidance from the respective directors, boards, secretary- treasurers, and other members of the ASC. The planned change (Bennis et al., 1969) involved a strategy of collaboration and power sharing as evidenced by the formation of the ASC, a committee representative of those with a stake in the amalgamation. It is the researcher's opinion there are elements of both first and second-order planned change to be found in the case study of school division amalgamation. Change occurs when something that used to happen in one way starts happening in another. This organizational change (Bridges, 1986, 1991), both structural and demographic, occurred at the time of amalgamation—January 1, 1997. Mechanical, situational, and occurring at a particular point in time, in order for the merger to take place the amalgamation process was managed on a rational model of what had to be done

and when. According to Bennis et al., this would be classified as an organizational first-order change, a process of amalgamation, mandated by the school divisions. Writing in the area of organization theory, Skibbins (1974) used the term *homeostasis* to describe first-order change as a state in which managers, in this case directors and boards, operate with limited short-range goals and tend to run systems pretty much as they are.

This change, the amalgamation of two school divisions, instigated additional change and, at every step, individuals involved in the amalgamation were plunged into transition. This *transition* constituted a second-order change, a psychological process extending over a period of time (Bridges 1986). The organizational transition process allowed individuals and groups involved in the amalgamation to reorient themselves so as to function and find meaning in the changed situation.

Levy (1986) drew a distinction between second-order change and second-order *planned* change which can be applied to the research study. Viewed as second-order change, the amalgamation of the Turnhill and Beaver Flat school divisions was characterized by a decline in both student enrollment and funding, thus creating a crisis situation. In Beaver Flat, first-order changes such as the consolidation of schools, reduced services, and personnel cuts at both the administrative and school level had proved unsuccessful in terms of sustaining a full service school division. These continuing and accelerating realities led to the demise of the school division and necessitated a "reframing" of the organization (Levy). This reframing was undertaken through the construct of amalgamation. With reference to Levy's perspective of planned and managed second-order change, in real life situations such as the amalgamation of school divisions, a new order is not rapidly established but takes time, energy and resources.

One can identify, within the amalgamation process, Levy's (1986) cycle of developmental stages in second-order change— decline, transformation, transition, and

stabilization (see Table 4). The decline is evidenced by Beaver Flat's inability to provide services to students and teachers and to remain fiscally solvent. The transformation occurred when Beaver Flat became part of another organizational structure. The transition process transpired as those individuals affected by the amalgamation moved through the iterative phases of endings, the neutral zone, and beginnings (Bridges, 1986). Stabilization occurred during the post amalgamation period; indeed, it is still taking place within the "new" division.

One could also argue that, at the time of amalgamation, only those undergoing the transition from one division to another were experiencing a second-order change. In other words, the Beaver Flat School Division's parents, students, teachers, Board of Education, school trustees, and others individuals involved in and affected by the amalgamation were in the midst of moving through the three iterative phases of transition (Bridges, 1986). Not everyone was at the same stage of the transition process; each person was experiencing the trauma of transition in his/her own time and place. On the other hand, at the time of amalgamation, those within the constituency of Turnhill were not involved in a second-order change; events and procedures within their division continued as usual. There was no substantial change in the Turnhill school system. However, it was during this time of transition for Beaver Flat and the stable situation in Turnhill that elements of transformation or the seeds of further second-order change originated. Subsequent to the amalgamation, the Turnhill Division began to experience change and transition in areas such as learning about and coming to a better understanding of the First Nations' culture and perspective, as well as experiencing transition within the new and enlarged board of Education. Indeed, even today, some two and one-half years into the amalgamation, the Turnhill School Division is still dealing with transitions and the integration of the various cultures within the two school divisions.

Discussions of change in relation to school division amalgamation also raises a question: Does school division size affect the degree to which amalgamating divisions

Table 4

Levy's (1986) Cycle of Developmental Stages in Second-Order Change

DECLINE ➡➡ TRANSFORMATION ➡➡ TRANSITION ➡➡ STABILIZATION

Beaver Flat's inability to provide services to students and teachers and to remain fiscally solvent	The amalgamation-Beaver Flat disjoins and becomes part of two adjacent school divisions	Individuals affected by the amalgamation move through the iterative phases of endings, the neutral zone and new beginnings (Bridges, 1986); still occurring on various fronts	The post-amalgamation period; continuing to occur

experience first and/or second-order change? It is the researcher's opinion that, in this instance of school division amalgamation, size did affect who experienced first and/or second-order change and to what degree. The smaller school division, Beaver Flat, had been taken in or annexed by the Turnhill Division and, so, for them, everything changed. It was only after the amalgamation, as the two divisions addressed the task of becoming a single entity, that the Turnhill Division entered into a their own journey of change and transformation, albeit at a more gradual and less traumatic pace.

Parallels can also be drawn between corporate mergers and acquisitions, one of the more commonly recognized forms of "right-sizing" (Hitt et al., 1994), and the right-sizing of school divisions through amalgamation. Halpern (1983), Jemison and Sitkin (1996), and Rhoades (1983) identified the most commonly discussed categories of motives for business mergers as financial and managerial. One can identify, in the reasons for school division amalgamation in this case study, a financial motive of increasing synergies through economies of scale and the applying of skills and knowledge from one division to the

other, as well as the managerial motive of decreasing uncertainty in Beaver Flat's external environment (see Table 5).

As indicated in the literature review, there is an abundance of classifications or typologies of mergers (Buono & Bowditch, 1989; Jemison & Sitkin, 1996; Levy, 1986; Lubatkin, 1983; Lundberg, 1984; McCann & Gilkey, 1988; Miles & Snow, 1995; Napier, 1989; Pritchett, 1985; Schweiger & Ivancevich, 1987). Of these classifications, three, typologies will be examined in relation to school division amalgamations: the degree of integration model, the strategic fit model, and the organizational fit/cultural model (see Table 6).

Napier (1989) described a typology of mergers in terms of degree of integration—extension, collaborative or design. School division amalgamation can be viewed as a collaborative or synergy merger which results in the two divisions blending on major operational and managerial functions or in the exchange of knowledge, technology and other talents. Moreover, redesign mergers imply the adoption of the policies and practices of one division by another, which was essentially the case in the amalgamation of Turnhill and Beaver Flat. As suggested by Napier, collaborative mergers may involve extensive changes on human resource practices as new policies are collaboratively developed or changed. These changes were evident in the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation. In redesign mergers or amalgamations the impact on human resource practices is often dramatic. It is the perspective of numerous Beaver Flat participants that the impact on human resource practices *was* dramatic and that Beaver Flat has essentially been reshaped in the image of the Turnhill organization.

Buono and Bowditch (1989) described the strategic fit model as being either horizontal, vertical, product extension, market extension, or unrelated. In the case of Beaver Flat and Turnhill, the amalgamation can be viewed as a horizontal merger. Both divisions provide the same services to geographically adjacent markets. The rationale underlying this merger is the achievement of economies of scale and operating efficiencies.

Table 5

Motives of M & A's and School Division Amalgamations

Motives of M & A's	School Division Amalgamation
Rightsizing (Hitt et al,1994)	**Large enough to provide a full range of services to students and teachers**
Financial (Halpern,1983; Jemison & Sitkin, 1996)	**Increasing synergies through economies of scale and the applying of skills and knowledge from one division to the other**
Managerial (Jemison & Sitkin, 1996; Rhoades, 1983)	**Decreasing uncertainty in Beaver Flat's external environment**

The merger was characterized by reductions in force— one director instead of two, as well as the integration of similar departments and functions— boards, support staff and local teacher organizations. The amalgamation of the two school divisions manifested horizontal merger characteristics such as the effect of the degree of friendliness between the two divisions on the negotiations. The amalgamation, viewed by some as an organizational rescue and by others, as was the case in the Longford subdivision, as a contested combination, entailed a collaborative approach which emphasized creating a fair deal for both divisions. Nevertheless, this "love and marriage" union (Buono & Bowditch) needed an integration strategy for the harmonizing of the two operations, a strategy which was time-consuming but effective. The integration strategy for the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation was addressed by such means as the formation of the ASC and its collaborative approach to problem-solving.

Elements of Pritchett's (1985) cooperative-adversarial continuum of organizational rescue, collaboration, contested combination, and raid situations can be identified in the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation. Characterized by one school division coming to the

Table 6

Typologies of M & A's and School Division Amalgamations

Typology	Reference	Relation to S. D. Amalgamations/ Implications
Degree of Integration Model: extension, collaborative, or design	Napier (1989)	**A collaborative or synergy merger** : a blending of major operational functions/ the exchange of knowledge, technology, and other talents; **Redesign** - the adoption of policies and practices of one division by another (adoption of Turnhill's by Beaver Flat); **A dramatic impact on human resource practices**: Beaver Flat reshaped in the image of Turnhill.
Strategic Fit Model: horizontal, vertical, product or market extension, unrelated	Buono & Bowditch (1989); Pritchett (1985); Lowrie (1990)	**Horizontal merger**- provide the same services; governed by the same legislation; share the same vision **Rationale**- economies of scale and operating efficiencies, reduction in force, integration of similar departments; Affected by the degree of friendliness - elements of organizational rescue/a financial salvage operation and contested combination; **Collaborative approach**: good will, diplomacy; Longford- elements of a "reluctant bride- loss of production, organizational momentum and post-merger adversity
Organizational Fit/Cultural Model: integrative theme of custom; common concerns and similar committees	Buono & Bowditch (1989); Bolman & Deal (1997)	**Culture**: a powerful determinant of individual and group behavior; Lack of organizational or cultural fit continues to threaten successful integration of the two divisions; a need for increased integration strategies

aid of another, the amalgamation can be viewed as an organizational rescue. Indeed, it was viewed as such by a number of the research participants. The ensuing rescue, as well as being a financial salvage operation, could be viewed as a friendly alternative to the government mandating an amalgamation. Through the establishment of the ASC and its collaborative format, negotiations were approached with a sense of goodwill and diplomacy, albeit with a degree of resistance by the Beaver Flat members to the cultures, operating systems and managerial orientations of the Turnhill School Division (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). The Longford situation is reminiscent of contested combinations with Longford undertaking the role of the "reluctant bride." The ensuing loss of pre-merger production, a decline in organizational momentum, and post-merger expressions of adversity were evident within the Longford subdivision (Lowrie, 1990).

A final comparison can be made between the M & A organizational fit/cultural model and the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation. Within the literature review of this model, there is an integrative theme of custom which concurs with Buono and Bowditch's (1989, p. 137) position that organizational culture "holds an organization together through traditional ways of carrying out organizational responsibilities, unique patterns of beliefs and expectations that emerge over time, and the resultant shared understandings of reality at given points in time." For Beaver Flat, these cultural elements came to a sudden end with the disestablishment of their school division. Cultural is a powerful determinant of both individual and group behavior and, regardless of the degree of strategic fit between the two school divisions, a lack of organizational or cultural fit, or its development, continues to threaten successful integration of the two divisions (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Buono & Bowditch 1989). Culture and cultural integration strategies will be further addressed in Question 4.

Amalgamations are complex undertakings. In spite of concerted efforts by the leaders and/or managers to do all the right things in the right way, research participants identified several issues they perceived as being either "unforeseen"—the splitting of the

Beaver Flat School Division and the division of assets and liabilities, First Nations representation on the Board, the cost of transferring titles, issues of closure, time, orientation needs, rationalization of budgeting procedures, and increased workloads related to the amalgamation process, or "missed"—closure activities, pre-amalgamation teacher orientation, procedural changes, and student involvement. Also of concern were post-amalgamations issues—continued communication with regard to amalgamation, what was going on, and to services available to students; the building of trust; the need to continue to discuss ongoing amalgamation issues; working with a larger and more cumbersome board; elections and orientation of new board members as well as school trustees; and policy reviews. The above concerns serve to underline the importance of flexibility to both time and process to merger success.

Question 3

What were the critical incidents in the amalgamation process?

As stated previously, what was perceived as a critical incident was colored by the perspective of individuals and/or interest groups, their role in the amalgamation process, and what was at stake for them. Regardless of whether the critical incidents were related to the process or the resolution of issues, there appears to be a constant juxtaposition of opinions— individuals were either happy or discontented with the process and the resolution of issues. Whether the process or resolution of issues was the "correct" one, is not within the purvey of this case study. What is significant is that these "critical incidents" point out the importance of being aware of and addressing these components during an amalgamation process (see Table 7).

Table 7

Critical Incidents

Process Issues	Issues Requiring Resolution
Inclusion: **Communication and consultation** before, throughout, and after amalgamation: open, public, honest, accurate, complete, timely, continuous. [Beaver Flat employees, Longford]	**The Longford Issue** The decision to **disjoin** and amalgamate with the Ladybank S.D.; pointed out the need for communication, consultation, and respect for individual and community positions
Leadership **Internal:** collaborative, trustworthy, honest, open to ideas, caring, fair. **External:** procedures and resolution of issues- Board representation, disjoining, local teachers' agreements	**The Division of Assets and Liabilities** A 75/25 split; the actual division resulted in varying degrees of satisfaction to both process and the end results.
Timing To consider amalgamation alternatives, deal with issues, administrative duties, adjust to change, the process itself; reflection. **Key: common sense and flexibility**	**Personnel Issues** Teachers and support staff well represented on the ASC; issues resolved through the **collaborative problem-solving process** with the exceptions of local teachers' agreements; resulted in legislation re grandfathering of teachers' agreements for subsequent amalgamations and in a strain on Board/teacher relationships. **Teacher concerns** regarding effect on level of services, the quality of teacher's work life, transfers, professional development opportunities. **Evidence of post-combination slump** (merger syndrome, survivor mentality, separation anxiety)
Personnel **Adequate** to deal with the amalgamation and regular administrative duties.	**Board Representation** **Enlarged Board**, 11 members including a First Nations representative.
External Support Provided by the **Minister of Education** and **Department officials.**	**Budgetary Considerations** Different modes of operation need to be **synchronized** (busing to sports events)
Mechanisms for the Resolution of Disputes Collaborative problem-solving within the ASC; generally satisfactory; exceptions- local teachers' agreements; the Longford issue; the division of assets and liabilities	**Amalgamation Costs; Policy Manuals; Boundary Determination** Resolved in a satisfactory manner; policies of Turnhill continued to be in effect, changes will occur in the course of regular policy review.

Process Issues

Research participants identified the following as "critical process" incidents: the inclusion of all stakeholder groups through communication and consultation both before, throughout and after the amalgamation process; leadership; timing; personnel; external support; and mechanisms for the resolution of disputes. In the area of inclusion, communication needs were described as open, public, honest, accurate as to both information and the process/legalities of amalgamation, complete, timely, and continuous. Inclusion reflected the need for sharing information, talking, forums for open discussion through public meetings, as well as the presence of stakeholder groups on the ASC. Research participants generally indicated a high degree of satisfaction in the area of communication and inclusion. Two exceptions are noteworthy: a number of Beaver Flat School Division employees indicated a perceived lack of direct, on-going and up-to-date information with regard to amalgamation issues and the status of the amalgamation, whether or not it was an issue of direct concern to them. Secondly, Longford voiced concern over hearing information for the first time through media releases. Furthermore, Longford Board members, subsequent to the decision to join with the Ladybank Division, expressed feelings of marginalization during amalgamation discussions. It was their perception that, after the resolution of an issue between Turnhill and Beaver Flat, there was an unspoken response of, "Ladybank and Longford need to do this, too." It does appear there is some validity to their perception of the amalgamation process. After Ladybank's initial and positive response to Longford's joining their school division, much of the discussion that followed was between the respective Directors and Boards. The perception of Longford was one of being cast adrift with no one at the helm of "their" amalgamation. That this occurred could well be attributed to the perceived lack of leadership by the provincial government.

Study participants addressed leadership on several levels (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Gardner, 1990; Sackney & Dibski, 1994). The use of words such

as collaborative, trustworthy, honest, open to ideas, caring, fair and not self-serving indicated the participants were, on the whole, satisfied with the degree and quality of leadership provided by both internal and external individuals. Internal leadership was provided by the Boards, Directors, local trustees, and representatives on the ASC. External leadership in the area of amalgamation procedures and in the resolution of issues such as Board representation, the splitting of the division, and teachers' local agreements was provided by the Minister, Department officials and Regional Directors.

At the same time, numerous participants expressed a need for increased provincial leadership in the area of educational governance restructuring through amalgamations. In their opinion, school divisions are looking for a specific game plan from the government, some explicit guidelines. Indeed, the widespread perception is that the government's "knowing non-leadership" is viewed, at the very least, as a lack of being pro-active in resolving educational governance problems and, at the very most, as an abdication of their responsibility to provide leadership in the governance and direction of education to their electorate, the people in Saskatchewan. Leadership should be doing the right thing, not doing the thing right (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). As indicated by interview responses, decisions made with political expediency and re-election in mind may not be the responsible or ethical response.

Timing is always an issue within any merger or amalgamation process (Mitchell, 1994; Monk & Haller, 1986). This was certainly the case for Beaver Flat and Turnhill; issues of time became evident on several fronts and, yet again, opinions varied as to how issues of time were expedited. These issues included: time to consider and weigh amalgamation alternatives, particularly for the Longford community; time to deal with amalgamation issues; time for Directors to deal with both amalgamation and division administration responsibilities; time to collect, organize, and disseminate information; time to adjust to change; time to adjust to new and different ways of doing things; the timing and pacing of the amalgamation process; time to involve people; time to bring schools and

individuals on-line; and time to reflect and dream. Indeed, time and timing is crucial to school division amalgamation. Whereas time lines are important and the amalgamation process needs to maintain a momentum, common sense and flexibility are additional key elements to school division amalgamations which occur within a collaborative decision-making model.

Mechanisms used for the resolution of disputes were generally satisfactory and can be attributed, in a great part, to the ASC—its composition and the effort of those individuals who were charged with the responsibility of liaising between the steering committee and the groups they represented. Admittedly, not all decisions were unanimous. Discussions within the respective boards were sometimes (often) heated and feelings of acrimony, rancor, and dissatisfaction were still evident at the time of the research study. This is a reality of mergers or amalgamations, regardless of what type (Buono & Bowditch, 1989).

Resolution Issues

Efforts to resolve issues included the solicitation of input from members of the ASC and those they represented. Charged with emotion, the resolution of issues resulted in varying degrees of satisfaction which were largely dependent on the perspectives of the individuals involved and affected by the issue. As identified by the participants, the major issues included: the Longford issue; the division of assets and liabilities, dealing with personnel; representation on the Board of Education; budgets, policy manuals, and boundary determination.

Perhaps the most volatile and difficult of issues was dealing with Longford's decision to disjoin from the Beaver Flat School Division and to seek amalgamation with a partner of their choice, a partner other than Turnhill. Reasons for the choice, the emotional responses of the three Beaver Flat subdivisions, and the resolution of the issue serve to point out the requirement for communication, consultation, and respect for

individual or community decisions. The Longford issue serves as a reminder that the road to mergers or amalgamations is often rocky, potholes do exist, and communities may choose to travel a different road in order to achieve quality education for their children.

Arising from the Longford decision to join the Ladybank School Division, the division of assets and liabilities was one of the last issues to be resolved in the amalgamation. Participants voiced varying degrees of satisfaction with both the process and the end results. While the determination of a 75/25 split, 75% of the assets and liabilities going to Turnhill and the remaining 25% to Ladybank, was easily reached, the actual division of the assets and liabilities proved to be difficult. Perhaps one could apply the analogy of a divorce to this situation. The marriage of the Beaver Flat subdivisions was coming to an end and, as is often the case, the division of marital property became a heated issue, accusations of underhanded dealings were made and the final solution was not completely satisfactory to either of the parties.

Both the composition of and the collaborative problem-solving process of the ASC served to address personnel issues. Teachers and support staff were well represented on the ASC and the majority of employees believed they had adequate time to discuss issues with their colleagues and to come back to the ASC with recommendations and possible solutions. The one notable exception resulted in the considerable furor over the grandfathering of local teacher agreements and the amount of time allocated to the negotiation of a new local teacher's agreement. Collaborative discussion over this issue collapsed with the passing of a motion by the Turnhill Board, a motion to set a date of January 1,1998 with respect to the completion of negotiations for a new and joint local agreement. Subsequent legislation by the Department resolved this issue for other amalgamations, legislation which ensured the grandfathering of teacher agreements up to the time that a new agreement could be negotiated and agree upon. As reported in the research findings, teachers in both divisions expressed strong feelings of dismay with regard to the Board's unilateral decision to limit the local agreement negotiation period. It

may well be that this experience will have a negative impact on future negotiations between the Board and the Turnhill Teacher's Association.

In addition to welfare issues, teachers expressed concern over the possible effects of amalgamation on pupil teacher ratios, the level of central office support, curriculum support, the role of consultants, and support for students with special needs. Other concerns included central office response time to problems, the distance factor with regard to service and travel to meetings, the quality of teacher work life, increased demands on in-school administrators, and issues of transfer and professional development opportunities. These concerns were not without merit. In an effort toward parity, Beaver Flat's pupil/teacher ratio had been increased previous to the amalgamation. Time and distance continue to be an issue. At the same time, in addition to their "regular" work, school administrators and teachers were in the midst of a transition process. Indeed, at the time of the interviews—six months into the amalgamation, the Beaver Flat teachers were exhibiting characteristics of what Marks and Mirvis (1986) identified as "merger syndrome," a term synonymous to McManus and Hergert's (1988) "survivor mentality," Pritchett's (1985) "post combination slump," and Astrachan's (1990) "separation anxiety." These terms, coined to describe the "post honeymoon period" of M & A's, refer to the time during which employees begin to question their role in the new organization and is typically manifested in declines in employee performance (Pritchett). This post-combination slump may include manifestation of preoccupation, imagining the worst, tension, chaos, a combat mentality, constricted communications, and illusions of loss of control (Marks & Mirvis).

Finally, resolution was required for issues in the areas of board representation, budgetary considerations, amalgamation costs, policy manuals, and boundary determination. In general, the formation of the ASC and its underlying approach of collaborative problem-solving worked well with regard to dealing with the "critical incidents" as perceived by the research participants.

Summary

It appears to the analyst, while each of these issues and their resolution were of vital importance to the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation process, the "what" of the resolution is an adjunct to participant perspectives on the "how" of the issue. In other words, much of the tension underlying the human side of the amalgamation process had a strong ethical component (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Buono & Bowditch, 1989; Schneider et al., 1994). Buono and Bowditch identified several key concerns which can be applied to the case study. The reality that mergers such as school division amalgamations involve multiple parties, each with their own interests and needs, can lead to competing claims as to what was done and if it was done in the right way. The managed release of information in an open, honest and timely manner as opposed to the controlled release of information to distort the truth and manipulate people may raise ethical concerns of secrecy versus deception. The distinction between coercion and participation is important to stakeholder groups. This was particularly apparent in teacher comments with regard to the negotiation of local agreements; teachers questioned whether the ASC and its collaborative problem-solving approach was a *true opportunity* to take part in discussions and decisions. In a sense, teachers were questioning whether the collaboration was real or contrived and being used as a way of "reinscribing administrative control within persuasive and pervasive discourses of collaboration and partnership" (Hargreaves,1994, p. 17).

As pointed out by Donaldson and Sheldrake (1990), the parameters of ethical decision-making in organizations are severely constrained by forces such as laws, cultural norms, labor relations, lack of ethical awareness, inflexibility, and the need to maintain expected efficiencies of operation. Efforts to address the ethical dimension of the amalgamation of Turnhill and Beaver Flat included openness in decision-making, valuing the opinion and input of stakeholder groups and their representative on the ASC, and the recognition that actions often require a balancing of principles that pull in different and often opposite directions. Certainly, the change process experienced through the

amalgamation provided the management— the Boards and Directors, with the opportunity to illustrate for their employees the organization's goals and priorities which, in turn, enabled teachers and support staff to "make meaning" of their new world. It is the researcher's opinion that the above ethical dimensions of amalgamation are closely tied to an important dimension of change, the dimension of leadership.

The literature review identified key attributes of leadership as principle-centered and displaying strength of character, integrity, honesty, loyalty, mental agility/quality of mind, courage, diplomacy, being supportive and sustaining, respectful, visionary and inspired (Hesellbein et al., 1996). As suggested by Sackney and Dibski (1994), these leadership characteristics are conducive to the development of collaborative organizational cultures. While distinctions are often made between the terms leadership and management, perhaps the two go hand-in-hand. There is no question that, in the amalgamation of the Turnhill/Beaver Flat School Divisions, the leaders were also the managers of the event. Leadership is key to the management of planned second- order change (Gardner, 1990). Leaders in the amalgamation process, as suggested by Bolman and Deal (1997), work within a variety of frames, depending upon circumstance, to manage the amalgamation process. Within the structural frame, leaders employ a process of analysis and design; within the human resource frame, leaders initiate a process of support and empowerment; within the political frame, leaders work toward advocracy and coalition building; and within the symbolic frame, leaders of the amalgamation process act as both prophet and poet providing inspiration and symbolically reframing experiences within the organization. It is unrealistic to expect those who were the leaders/managers of the amalgamation to carry the whole weight of the amalgamation process. Not withstanding the efforts of the Boards and Directors, members of the ASC also provided leadership during the transition process. Although the primary leadership focus in this dissertation has been on leaders in formal positions of authority; participants also recognized the role played by informal leaders and their influence, be it positive or negative, on the merger process.

Question 4

What attention was given to the technical, political, and cultural aspects of change?

The conceptual framework of the study suggested that management of the merger process—the school division amalgamation, indicated the need for attention to the technical, political and cultural dimensions of organizational change. Writing in this area, Tichy (1983) addressed the strategic management of change through a focus on the political, technical and cultural problems of organizations. This framework can be applied to the management of organizational uncertainty in times of turbulence and change and consists of aligning an organization's mission and strategy, structure, and human resource components within the technical, political and cultural systems of an organization (p. 6). Whether we see an event through a particular screen or whether we view different scenes through different screens, whichever screen is used results in a way of dealing with change and the advocation of certain policies rather than others (House, 1981, p. 17).

The technical path is one of systematic and rational processes (Tichy, 1982). Having determined that amalgamation was the best of solutions to the Beaver Flat dilemma, the Beaver Flat division began an amalgamation process. Subsequent to an assessment of environmental threats and opportunities as well as the strengths and weaknesses of their educational program, technical interests focused on the amalgamation process itself (see Table 8a). Technical reasoning or rational decision-making assumes that everyone has a common interest in advancing the amalgamation and that there is a considerable consensus in both interests and values. Conflict is accepted as the price of progress (House, 1981). Having reached consensus on the "what" of the solution, Beaver Flat's major problem then became one of finding the best means to the given end, amalgamation. Having determined their mission—to provide the best of educational opportunity to their children, and the strategy—amalgamation, both Beaver Flat and Turnhill next addressed the organizational structures needed for the change to take place.

Table 8a

Strategic Tasks for the Successful Management of School Division Amalgamations: Technical System

MANAGERIAL AREA *MANAGERIAL TOOLS*

Technical System	*Mission and Strategy*	*Organizational Structure*	*Human Resources Management*
	Assessing environmental threats (declining enrolments, reduced funding, the threat of mandated amalgamation) and **environmental opportunities** (choice of partner, control of process). **Assessing organizational strengths** (good programing, strong teaching staffs) and **weaknesses** (particularly in the area of special needs students, teacher support, counseling, curriculum support). **Defining mission** (to provide the best of educational opportunity) and **selecting resources** to accomplish it (the decision to amalgamate and the selection of a partner).	**Differentiating:** organizing work into roles (the ASC, Boards, Directors, Secretary-Treasurers). **Integration:** recombining roles into departments, divisions, regions, and so forth (integration of support staff and teacher groups). **Aligning structure to strategy** (determining what needs to be done, by whom; to integrate activities of both divisions and alignment of operations - school years, mill rates, teacher committees).	**Fitting people to roles** (the establishment of the ASC). **Specifying performance criteria for roles** (the mandate and responsibilities of ASC members, processes to deal with resolving issues). **Staffing and developing to fill roles, present and future** (aligning pupil teacher ratios, accommodating transfer requests).

Aligning the structure to the strategy entailed determining what needed to be done; who was responsible for what part of the process; and how to integrate the activities of the two divisions both as to process and, as much as possible, alignment of operations (Tichy, 1982). Human resources management, at this stage, focused on the establishment of the ASC, specifying criteria for the format of the steering committee and the establishment of processes to deal with the resolution of issues and the determination of the amalgamation path. Fundamental principles and assumptions of managing the amalgamation within the technological perspective also included the expectation of cooperation from both organizations and individuals and an assumption that actions taken would be efficient and accountable. The focal point was the amalgamation itself, how it was to be accomplished and its effects. Ethically, it was assumed that, because the amalgamation was in the common interest of all, the amalgamation should be pursued aggressively (House, 1981). Amalgamation from this perspective became a relatively mechanistic process and social relationships were based on technological necessity. The image was production-oriented, an input/throughput/output process— put in two school divisions, deal with the process in a series of rational steps and, behold, a "new" amalgamated school division.

The political aspect of a change process, according to Corbett and Rossman (1989), focuses on the interactions and interplay of the varying and divergent interests of those involved in a process (see Table 8b). Conflicts over interests by stakeholders—the various communities, groups within the communities, parents, Boards of Education and employees in both school divisions, resulted in negotiations and compromise, generally within the venue of the ASC. Concepts such as power, authority and competing interests came into play. Questions of who would get to influence the amalgamation decision and process arose. A prime example was the public's perception of expecting to vote on the issue only to discover that it was their duly elected Board of Education which had the legislated right, the power and authority to decide whether or not to amalgamate and with

Table 8b

Strategic Tasks for the Successful Management of School Division Amalgamations: Political System

MANAGERIAL AREA	*MANAGERIAL TOOLS*		
Political System	***Mission and Strategy***	***Organizational Structure***	***Human Resources Management***
	Who gets to **influence the mission and strategy** (Boards, Directors, ASC). **Managing coalitional behavior around strategic decisions** (conflicts over interests of communities, groups within communities, parents, boards, employees).	**Distributing power across the role structure** (within the ASC, power, authority, competing interests, who gets to influence the amalgamation decision and process). Who has **power and authority to make final decisions** re amalgamation decision, partner of choice, process and management of process- the Board(s) after consideration of recommendations by the ASC. **Power issues**: retaining direct representation for each community, the Longford decision to disjoin, the division of assets and liabilities, local teachers' agreements. **Balancing power across groups of roles** (between the Boards and Directors, within the ASC, at public meetings).	**Managing succession politics** (who gets ahead, how they get ahead, compromises between interest of divisions, Boards, and various stakeholder groups and individuals). **Designing and administrating reward system**, who gets what and how (school administrators, teaching assignments, pilot projects). **Managing the politics of appraisal**, who is appraised by whom and how (the role of consultants).

whom, what process would be followed, and how the process would be managed. Issues of power and authority came into play in a number of situations: the choice of an amalgamation partner; Longford, Falkland and Spence's determination to retain direct representation on a Board of Education; the Longford decision to disjoin from the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation; the division of assets and liabilities; and local teacher agreements.

Not withstanding that the final authority was vested within the Turnhill and Beaver Flat Boards of Education, the political perspective of amalgamation became one of how to manage coalitional behavior while making strategic decisions as to the amalgamation process and issues. Having decided that a steering committee was the managerial tool to best deal with organizational structure during the amalgamation, power was distributed and balanced through the formation and composition of the ASC and member roles both within the steering committee and the groups represented. Managing human resources within this context, negotiating as to who got what and how, and compromises both between the interests of the Turnhill and Beaver Flat divisions and the individual and combined stakeholder groups were important aspects of the strategic management of the amalgamation process (Tichy, 1982). Power struggles, particularly over issues of whether or not Longford could choose to secede and take their own path, the subsequent division of assets and liabilities, and teacher successor rights dominated much of the process.

With regard to the resolution of teachers' local agreements, conflicts over interests made cooperation problematic. While consensus is possible after a negotiation of interests, this was not the case in the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation. Ethics, from a political perspective, are contractual (House,1981). In this instance, teachers in both divisions expressed a strong belief that the perceived contract of a collaborative problem-solving approach to the amalgamation process had been broken. This perception was a direct result of the Board's unilateral decision to limit negotiations for a new local agreement to one year. Managing change strategically, from a political viewpoint, means

looking at change within the context of amalgamation, a context which is conflict-oriented and within which the negotiation and compromise of differences does not necessarily result in the best interests of individuals or groups.

The cultural perspective is one of context—how the amalgamation process was structured, how life was lived, and how the amalgamation was interpreted (see Table 8c). Meanings and values are the focal point (House, 1991) and participants in the amalgamation process are seen as cultures and subcultures. The different stakeholder groups—communities, school divisions, parents, students, teachers, trustees, and support staff are seen as distinct and separate; conflicts and misunderstandings are interpreted as conflicts in values (pp. 24-25). The amalgamation process required the interaction of these separate cultures and the effects were often diffuse and somewhat intangible. Cooperation between groups or cultures is enigmatic and changes resulting from the amalgamation have different meanings for different groups or individuals. Values are shared within small groups and these differing values may be in conflict. The amalgamation may have unanticipated consequences and throughout the process, cultural groups tend not to impose on other groups. The cultural image is meaning-oriented and one of community.

The various communities engaged in the amalgamation of the Turnhill and Beaver Flat School Divisions, whether it was a community consisting of schools, towns and the surrounding rural area, parents, First Nations groups, teachers, students, or support staff can be defined as communities or cultures by virtue of shared meanings resting on shared values. Social relationships between the members are often traditional and a primary value is the integrity of their culture. The relationships within these cultures may be obligatory and binding while relationships across cultures are relativistic. Thus, strategic management within the cultural system implies managing the influence and philosophies of the divergent cultures or communities so there is an alignment with the mission and strategy of the amalgamation (Clemente & Greenspan, 1999; Tichy, 1982; Walker, 1998). In order to

Table 8c

Strategic Tasks for the Successful Management of School Division Amalgamations: Cultural System

MANAGERIAL AREA	*MANAGERIAL TOOLS*		
Cultural System	***Mission and Strategy***	***Organizational Structure***	***Human Resources Management***
	Managing influence of values and philosophy on mission and strategy: meanings and interpretations of the process by various stakeholder grous, communities, cultures and sub-cultures within both divisions. **Developing culture aligned with mission and strategy:** integration of two cultures as well as developing an understanding of First Nations culture.	**Developing managerial style aligned with technical and political structure:** new and often expanded role for local trustees and school administrators. **Developing subcultures to support roles.** **Integrating subcultures to create a company culture:** the various teaching communities, teachers with similar interests and expertise, support staff group, ethnic groups.	**Selecting people to build or reinforce culture:** in school, various committees. **Developing (socialization) to mold organization culture:** meeting as an entire group. **Managing rewards to shape and reinforce the culture:** recognition of expertise, sharing of knowledge, professional development opportunities.

achieve this, there needs to be a structural integration of the Turnhill and Beaver Flat cultures and subcultures to create a "new" school division culture. Indeed, merger of the two disparate cultures may well be especially tricky, because the amalgamation interrupted two strong cultures (*The Economist*, 1999). Efforts to this end included joint meetings of the various stakeholder groups from each division. For example, both the support staff and teacher groups from each division met regularly throughout the amalgamation process to discuss common concerns and put forward recommendations. The 1996 joint fall orientation for all employees of both divisions and the inclusion of representatives from both divisions on teacher committees well in advance of the actual amalgamation date

provided opportunities for socialization and the molding of a "new" organizational culture. Discussions with the First Nations groups was a step toward understanding their cultural values and the meanings they attribute to schooling. The comments of individuals with regard to "belonging," and "us" rather than a "we" and "them," indicated that much work remains to be done in this area.

The three perspectives—technical, political, and cultural, can act as an interpretive framework for understanding the amalgamation process. As House (1981, p. 19) suggested, "by so framing the social phenomenon, [school division amalgamation, these perspectives] serve as a guide to what is important and as a guide to action." However, House cautions, people operating within the same framework may agree on relevant concepts and what the issues are, yet take different sides on the issues.

Tichy (1983) visualized the three environments—technical, political and cultural, as three intertwined strands of rope which are, in turn, each made up of many substrands. Just as ropes become unraveled and weaken, when an organization's technical, political and cultural strands work at cross-purposes, the organization is devitalized. Tichy believed "strategic management is the process of keeping the rope together in the face of changing demands brought on by technical, political, and cultural changes in the environment" (p. 64). The amalgamation of school divisions is one example of the need for the strategic management of change so as to keep the "rope" together and through this action, reap the benefits of a revitalized organization.

Question 5

What approaches were used to address human resource concerns during the transition?

Bridges (1991, pp. 3-4) defined change as situational and external and transition as psychological and internal, a personal reorientation of people as they move through and come to terms with change. In this instance, the change is the amalgamation of two school

divisions. In order for the amalgamation to work, transition must occur. Managing the transition may prevent the change from becoming unmanageable.

The need for transition management during times of organizational change is, to some extent, dependent on the magnitude of the change, the concerns of the individuals and the transition stage(s) of the individuals affected by the change. See Table 9 for a description of endings, regrouping and new beginnings as experienced during pre-amalgamation, amalgamation, and post-amalgamation times. While all individuals involved in the amalgamation underwent a transition process, the magnitude of the change was most apparent with regard to people in the Beaver Flat constituency. Furthermore, the change was singularly distressing for those directly involved in and affected by the change—teachers, board members, trustees and support staff. The disestablishment of the Beaver Flat School Division resulted in the loss of attachments, turf, a known structure and future, meaning, and control (Tichy, 1983). These feeling of loss resulted in disengagement— a separation from the subjective world Beaver Flat residents knew, disidentification— loss of a sense of their identity in a former situation, and disenchantment— a breakdown of their meaning-making capacity.

Concerns over the amalgamation were most evident among the Beaver Flat teachers and included such items as job security; collective bargaining agreements; communication and trust building; board policies in the areas of seniority, redundancies, and transfers; the avoidance of turf protection, becoming an "us;" the effect of amalgamation on opportunities for students and the teaching/learning environment; working with consultants; and changes in procedure. Indeed, each of the various stakeholder groups had concerns specific to their role in the amalgamation process.

Transition is a truism of life—whether it be from infancy to adulthood, from a single to marital status, job changes, divorce, or death within a family; how we deal with transitions is very much a reflection of past personal experiences. Such being the case,

Table 9

Amalgamation and Transition Management

Phase → → → Event	***Endings***	***Regrouping (neutral zone)***	***Beginnings***
Pre-amalgamation Discussions	Somewhat abstract. **Beaver Flat:** Anticipated end to school division and larger community, personal contacts, loss of what used to be and established procedures. **Turnhill:** Concerns over effects in terms of central office level of support. Empathy for individuals and colleagues in Beaver Flat.	Acceptance of **change.** Recognition of **loss.** Recognizing the **ending.** Anticipation of **new and increased** support and opportunities.	For some, only **"another change."** Individuals ready to meet **new challenges**, take advantage of available opportunities **Joint planning** by the two divisions. **Limited socialization.** Committees from both divisions begin to operate as one.
Disestablishment of Beaver Flat S.D.	**Sharp sense of loss.** Endings: ready or not. **Disintegration.** **Loss of established cultures,** relationships, close contact with central office administration.	**Disorientation.** **Disintegration.** **Perceptions** of "rescue," teacher professional issues; "poor country cousins." Thinking about **perceived problems.** Attempts to **reduce complexities** to key issues. Confusion: Why? How do we? Anticipating **opportunities,** support.	**Symbolic recognition of endings.** Adjusting to new **procedures.** **Changing roles for** Boards, local trustees, school administrators. Central office visits to new schools. Principals play key role in understanding, adjusting to procedural change.
Life in the "new" Turnhill S.D.	Continued struggles with change. **Dissolution** of the ASC. **Transition processes continue to evolve.** **Phases of transition begin for Turnhill School Division. Individuals in both divisions continue to move through reiterative phases of transition, depending upon circumstance, issues, personal state of transition readiness.**	**Revisiting of concerns.** A move toward **acceptance** of the many changes.	**Continuation** of activities initiated during regrouping. **Expanded horizons.** Adjusting to **new procedures.** A sharing of **histories.** **Redefinition of various roles:** Boards, trustees, principals. **Enlarged Board** struggles to integrate disparate cultures, modes of operation. Efforts continue to **integrate, understand cultures.** Expressed needs for **continued discussion** of amalgamation issues and communication with public.

throughout the amalgamation individuals moved through the transition stages at their own pace and time, regardless of the pace of the amalgamation process. Also, moving through the transition process was a reiterative experience for numerous individuals (Bridges, 1992). For example, a teacher could still be dealing with endings such as the loss of teaching colleagues and also be at the beginning stage of enjoying new opportunities for professional development. Whereas transition readiness is an individual condition, it is not unrealistic to ascertain that, even today, the transition process continues to take place within the "new" Turnhill School Division.

Although the focus of the amalgamation effort was perceived by many of the participants as dealing with the technical and political aspects of managing change, transition management was an underlying force throughout much of the process. Communication and giving people information and doing it again and again was identified as a key component of transition management, as was treating the past with respect and ensuring that what really mattered— a quality education for children, would continue. Expressions of empathy from their own community members and colleagues as well as from Turnhill supported the individuals moving through the transition. What did not happen, at least to a great degree, was an open acknowledgment of endings and losses by the people of Beaver Flat. Both they and the receiving Director and School Board were somewhat taken aback by the level of emotions experienced during the last months of life of the Beaver Flat School Division.

Furthermore, the Beaver Flat School Division, as a whole, moved through the transition phases at a different pace and time than did the Turnhill School Division. For Beaver Flat individuals, transition began at the outset of amalgamation discussions and continued to occur with a continuous escalation of momentum, while the Turnhill transition experience occurred, to a considerable extent, only after the time of amalgamation. Longford School, on the other hand, was still moving through the initial

transition phases only to find themselves embroiled in another major change/transition precipitated by Ladybank's own amalgamation initiative.

Bridges' (1986) supposition that the Western mind has difficulty with acknowledging the second step in a transition process, that of crossing the neutral zone, as a meaningful and productive time was borne out by the research participants' comments. Breaking away from the social forces of the old divisions, putting aside assumptions, and allowing themselves to find a new identity was, for all concerned, a time of disorientation and disintegration (Bridges). This "muddle in the middle" was not uneventful and allowed time for individuals and organizations alike to go through "a kind of inner sorting" (p. 46).

Efforts were made by both divisions and the ASC to normalize this neutral time. For example, efforts to strengthen intragroup connections included joint division meetings, inservice days, conventions and committee work. The ASC, a temporary structure, was instrumental in informing stakeholder groups as to what was happening and in presenting and dealing with both individual and group concerns. It would appear that for many of the individuals interviewed, their "neutral zone time" generally occurred within the six months both before and after the amalgamation date. What did not occur, in the researcher's opinion, was an explicit and open acknowledgment of the neutral zone as a very real, turbulent and *beneficial* time. In fact, everyone was experiencing the neutral zone to some degree, but giving voice to the experience was frequently interpreted as a negative response to the amalgamation process. As a result, opportunities for creativity and doing things differently and better were not always taken advantage of as they might have been. The amalgamation process could have benefitted from the presence of a "transition team," as encouraged by Bridges (1992), either in the form of the ASC or an adjunct committee, to monitor and assist individuals in transition.

As the amalgamated school division began to build upon the new orientation and identity that was emerging out of the neutral zone, the Turnhill Director was faced with the onerous and challenging task of mobilizing positive energy within the organization.

Given that employees in most large organizations are "sensation types" (Jung, cited in Bridges, 1986) who deal with the details of the present, it was imperative to quickly and clearly establish Bridges' four P's—purpose, picture, plan, and part to play (Bridges, 1991, p. 52). Being consistent, ensuring quick success, symbolizing the new identity, and celebrating success was part of this process. That this had already begun was apparent in the interview transcripts. Stakeholder groups, particularly teachers, were appreciative of the increased support for students and teachers and opportunities for professional development from both a sharing and learning perspective.

It is of interest to note that, although individuals have generally moved through the three transition stages and have started to make "new beginnings," a number of pre-merger concerns continue as post-merger issues. Examples include issues of belonging, the perceived (or real) loss of benefits, and the effect of increased division size on the delivery and effectiveness of support services. While these experiences are illustrative of the reiterative element of transitions, they can also be explained through the concept of merger syndrome (Marks & Mirvis, 1997). Although mergers have become more systematic and managers are smarter about doing deals and managing integration, post-merger integration continues to be the greatest challenge to merger success. The merger syndrome, first described by Marks and Mirvis over 10 years ago, "has actually become more prevalent....Enunciation of a clear strategic vision, good and open communication, and sensitization sessions are among the tools [organizations] can use to smooth the entry of new people into a combined organization" (p. 10).

Perhaps the establishment of Bridges' (1991) four elements— purpose, picture, plan, and part to play, needs to occur during each stage of the amalgamation process, pre-amalgamation, amalgamation, and post-amalgamation. Acting as a trigger for second-order change, the reoccurrence of these four elements could serve to provide a focus for the management of strategic change and to aspects of amalgamation and transition relevant to each of the respective amalgamation stages.

Managing the transition aspect of planned second-order change is not an easy task. Closely tied to the cultural aspects of managing strategic change, transition is, however, an entity unto itself. Unfortunately, transition management approaches appear to be somewhat ambiguous and transition concerns are frequently found to be hovering around the periphery of whatever lens one is looking through, be it technical, political, or cultural. Understanding the stages of transition is the only the first step. It is the researcher's opinion that all stages of the transition process need to recognized and celebrated. What we do with it is what counts. Attention to transition management in times of organizational change will only serve to enhance the process and increase the odds for organizational success.

Question 6

What has school division amalgamation come to mean to the stakeholders?

Merriam (1998, p. 6) observed: "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world." With this in mind, it is not only myself who has been trying to discover and understand the phenomenon of school division amalgamation. It became apparent to me, as the research took shape, that the individuals directly involved in and affected by the amalgamation of Turnhill/Beaver Flat and Ladybank/Beaver Flat were also working through their own processes of "making meaning" of the amalgamation. This "making meaning" was being experienced within the context of their own and individual realities. Given that making meaning is a unique experience to each person, common themes can also be drawn from the data (see Table 10). It is important to note that the meanings attributed to the school division amalgamation as discussed herein are bounded as to the time and place of the case study.

Table 10

The Meaning of School Division Amalgamation: Emerging Themes

Rationalization of the Amalgamation	**If amalgamation is good their child''s education, then it's OK.** **Advantages for students; a level playing field.** **Provision of support to achieve a quality education**
Stability	**For schools, communities, individuals.** **Continued operation of schools, educational programs.** **Reduced threat of imminent school closure.** **Reasonable mill rates.**
Retaining a Sense of Identity	**Feelings of belonging, being valued.** **Respect for individuals and communities.** **Experiences during the process affected individual perceptions of identity.**
True Participant	**Increases palatability of a change process.** **If collaborative decision-making is the vehicle of choice, it must be honored.** **Results of collaboration and cooperation are ownership and cultural integration.**
Flexibility	**At all stages of the amalgamation process.** **Provision of time to move through transition process, to make meaning of changed world.**
Additional Descriptors	.Frustration .Dealing with a larger, more cumbersome system .Adjusting to new procedures, expanded services .Changed roles and responsibilities .Melding of the Board cultures, administrative vs policy roles .Increased workloads for administration .Satisfaction of providing improved services to students .Longford- exercising right of choice, retention of "ruralness" .Disjoining- adversity, rancor, pain, loss, dissatisfaction with process, division of assets and liabilities. .Clarification of teacher successor rights . Reinforcing individuals opinions on the need for continued amalgamations in rural areas .Exhaustion, exhilaration .Positive experience with the collaborative decision-making process .Appreciative of participating in the amalgamation process

During research into the amalgamation and the management of the process a number of themes emerged. The first and, perhaps, overriding theme concerned *rationalization* of the amalgamation. Participants want to *know* their students will receive an education which will prepare them for entry into the larger world. Rural parents expect that when students graduate, they will find themselves on a level playing field with their urban counterparts. If governance restructuring, in this case the amalgamation of the two divisions, will provide students and teachers with the necessary supports to achieve this end, then amalgamation is "OK" and communities are willing to support the concept. Having said that, several other themes came into play and had a definite bearing as to how boards, teachers, parents, communities, and individuals viewed the amalgamation.

Change has become a constant of life and, although the participants acknowledged this fact, within the ever increasing turbulence of life, institutions, communities and individuals continue to seek *stability*. The Beaver Flat School Division had been in search of stability for some time. The amalgamation meant their schools would continue to operate and maintain educational programs, students and teachers would receive support, the threat of imminent school closure was eliminated, and ratepayers could expect reasonable mill rates increases. Amalgamation with Turnhill received a positive reception in communities already experiencing economic restraints. Beaver Flat communities would, hopefully, continue as viable entities and parents/ratepayers would continue to experience a degree of autonomy through direct representation on the Board of Education. Teachers' jobs would remain relatively secure and a larger division would offer expanded professional opportunities.

Yet another theme, *retaining a sense of identity* in the midst of change, was identified by a number of the research participants. Feelings of belonging, being valued and respected were important to stakeholder groups and individuals. How the transition process was managed and the experiences of people during the merging of the two

divisions had a significant impact on how people came to understand and make meaning of their role in the process and the role they would have within the "new" division.

Another theme was that of being a *true participant*. Working through a change process becomes substantially more palatable when individuals believe their input is valued. If collaborative decision-making is the vehicle of choice for dealing with the many issues and concerns inherent in a school division amalgamation, then it *must* be honored. When collaboration becomes the norm, not the exception, problems are addressed cooperatively, ownership of solutions ensue, and the cultural merging of two organizations can begin.

A final theme that emerged was that of *flexibility*, particularly in the arena of time. Inherent in the concept of making meaning of one's ever changing circumstance or world is an understanding that transition takes time. Adequacy of time to investigate alternate solutions to Beaver Flat's dilemma, time to look at potential amalgamation partners, time to consult with your public, time to work through the process, time to become acquainted with your "new" partner and to gain an understanding of their values and cultures, time to consult with stakeholder groups, and time to learn about and adjust to procedural change—all require flexibility and patience. Time allows people to move through the transition process and to make meaning of their world.

Additionally, amalgamation also came to mean specific things to the various stakeholder groups or individuals. As stated earlier, at different points in time during the amalgamation process, amalgamation came to mean frustration—too many things to deal with, too short a time in which to do them, and too much to do for those working on the amalgamation. Amalgamation came to mean dealing with a real or perceived larger, more unresponsive, and cumbersome system. To some, amalgamation came to mean new opportunities and support for teachers and students. To Beaver Flat board members, trustees, in-school administrators and teachers, it came to mean learning about and adjusting to new procedures and expanded services. To school trustees, amalgamation

came to mean changed roles and responsibilities. Coming together as a unit has been a struggle for the "new" Board; Beaver Flat was primarily an "administrative" board while the Turnhill Board had adopted a model of governance by policy. This has created both leadership and ethical dilemmas for the amalgamated division. If boards don't "understand and internalize their central...role in developing ends policies, monitoring administrative action, and controlling their own board processes, they may feel that the model is a veiled attempt by administrators to remove them from control of the organization" (Moore & Loder, 1997, p. 5). Three trends which have contributed to a move toward the use of more effective governess process by boards of education are "a focus on the essential policy role of the board, the downloading of responsibility to the boards, and a greater emphasis on participatory, collaborative decision-making at all levels" (p. 3). Carver (1990) defined policy as the values and perspectives, representative of the ownership of the organization, which provide the foundation for all behavior within that organization. Carver (pp. 27-28) stated that: "A simple shift away from detailed and event-specific governance to values and valuing produces a powerful shift in board leadership." Indeed, as the integration of the Turnhill and Beaver Flat boards continues to evolve, this shift in perspective could well be transformational for both the "old" and "new" board members.

To the Turnhill Board, amalgamation came to mean an increase in workload, whether it was the amalgamation itself, bringing new schools and staffs on-line, providing services to more students without support staff increase, and informing and dealing with a more unwieldy board of eleven members. To those within the Turnhill Division, amalgamation came to mean both the satisfaction of serving students in the larger community and concerns as to how this change would impact on their own educational systems and communities.

To members of the Longford community, amalgamation came to mean exercising their right to belong to the school division of their choice and, as a result, safeguarding the "ruralness" of their community, and the continuing viability of their school and town.

Amalgamation also came to mean continued change for, upon completion of this amalgamation, the Longford subdivision immediately found themselves involved in yet another amalgamation process. To the Beaver Flat School Division and the Longford issue, amalgamation also came to mean adversity, rancor, pain, and loss. Dealing with endings was particularly difficult for the individuals involved in the Beaver Flat split.

To all teachers, the amalgamation came to mean addressing and settling the issue of successor rights, both for themselves and teachers throughout the province. To the members of the Eagle First Nations group, amalgamation meant continued recognition of their right to direct representation on the Board of Directors and the concomitant right to vote on decisions.

To the Beaver Flat Director, the amalgamation served to reinforce his belief that there is a need for amalgamations to continue, particularly in rural Saskatchewan, as well as a need for increased leadership from the government, and the satisfaction of fulfilling his mandate—to see Beaver Flat through an amalgamation process. To the Director of Turnhill, amalgamation came to mean exhaustion and exhilaration, exhaustion due to the overwhelming amount of work and time the process demanded and exhilaration over the opportunity to be a part of what he perceived as a positive event for both school divisions and the challenges forthcoming. To numerous individuals, amalgamation came to mean a first-hand experience with collaborative decision-making and the satisfaction experienced in being part of and contributing to the amalgamation process.

Summary

The primary question for investigation in the case study was : ***With attention to the technical, political, and cultural aspects of change management, how did the process of amalgamation unfold and what meaning was ascribed by the participants to the process?***

The conceptual framework of the study suggested that management of a school division amalgamation indicated the need for attention to the technical, political, and cultural dimensions of organizational change. Within the context of school division amalgamation, specific process responses ensued as a result of whichever screen—technical, political or cultural, was used.

Systematic and rational processes were reflected in the technical aspect of the amalgamation. Subsequent to Beaver Flat's assessment of environmental threats and opportunities as well as the strengths and weaknesses of their educational program, technical interests focused on the process of amalgamation. A rational reasoning process resulted in the Beaver Flat decision to seek an amalgamation partner for the purpose of providing the best of educational opportunity to their children. Efforts to align the structure to the technical strategy included the determination of what needed to be done, who was responsible for what part of the process and how to integrate the activities of the two divisions both as to process and the alignment of operations. Human resources management entailed the establishment of the ASC and processes to deal with the resolution of issues. The focal point in the technical arena was the amalgamation itself, how it was to be accomplished, and its effects. In this respect, amalgamation became a mechanistic process and social relationships were based on technical necessity. The image was production oriented, an input/throughput/output process.

The political aspect of the amalgamation process focused on the interactions and interplay of the divergent interests of those involved in the amalgamation. Conflicts of interests resulted in negotiations and compromise which generally occurred within the

ASC and Board meetings. Political power was evident in the Board of Education's control over the final decisions with regard to the amalgamation question, the choice of amalgamation partner, and the process to be followed. Having decided that a steering committee would best serve as the managerial tool to deal with organizational structure, power was distributed and balanced through the formation and composition of the ASC. Managing human resources within this context, negotiating as to who got what and how, and compromises between various interest groups were aspects of the strategic management of the amalgamation process. Power struggles over contentious issues dominated much of the process. Managing change strategically from a political viewpoint meant looking at change within the context of conflict, negotiation, and the compromise of differences.

The cultural perspective of the amalgamation process focused on meanings and values. The different stakeholder groups were seen as distinct and separate entities and conflicts and misunderstandings were interpreted as resulting from disparate values. The various communities engaged in the amalgamation process, whether they consisted of schools, towns, parents, First Nations groups, teachers, students or support staff were defined as communities or cultures by virtue of shared meanings resting on shared values. Therefore, the strategic management within these cultural systems became a question of managing the influence and philosophies of the divergent communities so there would be an alignment with the mission and strategy of the amalgamation process. As a result, the amalgamation process included efforts to structurally integrate the Turnhill and Beaver Flat cultures and subcultures through such venues as public meetings and the joint meetings of interest groups from the two divisions.

Tichy's (1983) visualization of the three environments—technical, political and cultural, as three intertwined strands of ropes, each rope consisting of many substrands, is a graphic representation of the need for an amalgamation process which attends to the alignment of the three strands and, through that alignment, promotes cohesion and

organizational vitality. The three dimensions operate in an interdependent and holistic manner.

Meanings ascribed by the participants to the amalgamation process depended upon the lens or perspective through which each participant was viewing the process as well as the location and role in which individuals found themselves, either as a parent, a student, a trustee, a board member, a director or a teacher, or a combination of any of the above. First and foremost, the amalgamation process presented all participants with a venue within which they could ask questions, make suggestions, and give voice to their concerns. The formation and mandate of the ASC provided for the discussion of issues and the presentation of recommendations to the Boards of Education. Public meetings allowed for the inclusion and input of all interested individuals. The amalgamation process used a collaborative and win/win approach to amalgamation discussions and the resolution of the various issues. In general, the amalgamation process was well received and most participants were satisfied with the process. However, there were notable exceptions, particularly with regard to the resolution of the issues of Longford, the division of assets and liabilities, and the grandfathering of local teacher agreements. In each of these three situations, the credibility and integrity of the amalgamation process as well as that of the individuals involved came into question. In these instances, to a large extent, satisfaction with the amalgamation process depended upon how satisfied one was with the results. However, although not everyone was satisfied with either the process of amalgamation or the resolution of the various issues all of the time, the amalgamation process came to mean an opportunity to provide children with what was perceived as the best of educational opportunities in the location of their choice.

Conclusions

Some tentative conclusions can be inferred from the study but cannot be generalized beyond the amalgamation of the respective school divisions. However, the "thick" data provided by the study may make transferability judgements possible on the part of other school divisions engaged in an amalgamation process. The readers of this study are, therefore, the people who will determine if the findings in this particular amalgamation can be applied to another setting.

1. More emphasis needs to be paid to the cultural aspects of an amalgamation. Discovering and critically examining the cultural norms, beliefs, values, and assumptions of the respective school divisions is vital to the implementation of a cultural integration strategy. Although both of the amalgamating divisions encompass rural communities, within each school division there are numerous subcultures or communities and any one individual usually belongs to a number of communities—the community one lives in, a school community, a church community, a community of friends, a community of teachers with similar perspectives, and so on. Each community has its own norms, customs, roles, rituals, ceremonies, and symbols. Each division, school, and community brought their individual cultures to the amalgamation table. While the actual amalgamation or merger occurred within a relatively compressed period of time, the study indicates that cultural integration requires more time. Indeed, cultural integration continues to occur within the "new" division.

Although there is a considerable body of merger literature which addresses the human resource issue, it is only recently that human resource considerations have played an expanded role in the planning of mergers. Organizational culture is what "holds an organization together through traditional ways of carrying out organizational responsibilities, unique patterns of belief and expectations that emerge over time" (Buono & Bowditch, 1989, p. 137). During times of organizational change and transition,

competing cultural traditions can threaten successful integration of the amalgamating divisions. In addition, when one school division is absorbed by another, as was the case in the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation, a variety of these communities or cultures either cease to exist or are substantially changed. There is a need to fill the void left by the ending of an implied psychological contract which existed between the disestablished school division and its public and employees. It is important that those who are managing the merger process remember "what people in an organization experience as the climate and believe is the culture, ultimately determines whether sustained change is accomplished" (Schneider et al., 1996, p. 13).

2. During school division amalgamations, there is a need for increased attention to the iterative aspects of the transition process. Resistance to transition is a natural act of self-preservation in the face of multiple and diverse change. A dynamic people process, transition is the gradual psychological process through which individuals or groups reorient themselves when they find themselves within a new situation. Change requires people and organizations to make transitions and giving attention to this aspect of planned second-order change is crucial to amalgamation or merger success. It is important that both mangers and those undergoing transition know about and understand the three iterative phases of the transition process—endings, the neutral zone, and new beginnings. Only then can the transition be facilitated through the development of strategies which enhance participation in the amalgamation process. Change processes are not linear; events in one phase may feed back to a previous stage and individuals then continue to work through the phases of transition in a continuum of action (Bridges, 1991). Transition management or attention to the human side of mergers is a cornerstone to successful change.

3. Organizations are continually undergoing shifts and changes and, in times of uncertainty such as school division amalgamations, it is important that an organization's components of mission and strategy, structure, and human resources be aligned both within and between the technical, political, and cultural systems of an organization. Framing school division amalgamation within these three perspectives can provide school divisions with a guide to what is important and a guide to action. In other words, the school division amalgamation process is largely determined by how the change is managed within the technical, political and cultural systems of the organization. It is essential that school divisions undertaking an amalgamation initiative have a clear conceptualization of the process to be followed and that the process is responsive to the interdependent technical, political, and cultural systems of the amalgamating divisions.

4. Leadership is an important component of successful school division amalgamations, the management of planned second-order change, and merger success. Regardless of whether we are discussing educational governance restructuring through the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and the leadership of the government in power or local leadership during the amalgamation event, leaders have a responsibility to do what is in the best educational interests of the children in our school systems. As amalgamations continue to occur in various parts of Saskatchewan, governance structures need to consider more closely what is happening— the "bigger picture" with regard to the redesigning or restructuring of provincial school division boundaries. The fact that the Longford subdivision faced one amalgamation only to be immediately thrown into another merger is a powerful example of what happens when there is not a "master plan." Trauma times two is neither helpful nor desirable for those involved in school division amalgamations.

Of the many attributes we expect leaders to have, suffice it to say the following: Leadership is a key dimension of change (Fullan, 1991). Primary attributes of leadership

discussed in the literature review are equally applicable to change in the form of school division amalgamations. These attributes can be summarized as principle-centered and displaying strength of character, integrity, honesty, loyalty, mental agility and quality of mind, courage, diplomacy, being supportive and sustaining, respectful, visionary, and inspired, all with an eye for change, a steadying hand, and a willingness to empower those within an organization. These leadership characteristics are conducive to the development of collaborative organizational cultures.

5. Literature on business M & A's and organizational change can serve to enhance our understandings of the dynamics inherent in school division amalgamations, particularly in the areas of strategic, organizational and cultural fit. The congruency between school division amalgamations and horizontal mergers is evident in the strategic fit between amalgamating school divisions (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). School divisions provide their public with the same service—educating children. Given the fact school divisions are governed by the same legislative body and its mandates, school divisions are similar in organizational structure. The Turnhill and Beaver Flat school division amalgamation, a combination of organizational rescue—one school division coming to the aid of another and collaborative merger—in which negotiations are approached with a sense of good will and diplomacy (Pritchett, 1985), engaged in pre-merger bargaining with a focus on creating a fair deal for both constituencies. In addition, the Longford issue is somewhat representative of the contested combination in M & A's. The Longford subdivision opposed the decision of the Beaver Flat Board to amalgamate with Turnhill, opting instead to amalgamate with Ladybank. It is important to note, however, that differences in structure and operations do exist between corporations and publicly funded institutions. In a business M & A there is little, if any, likelihood that a division of the corporation would be allowed to leave the corporate fold. In the case of public institutions

which are largely funded through property taxation, school subdivisions do have input into and can influence amalgamation decisions.

6. Maintaining the credibility of the amalgamation process is largely dependent upon keeping lines of communication open, the timely sharing of consistent and accurate information, and including all interested stakeholder groups. Attention to these issues is important during the pre-merger and merger stages. It is equally important during the post-merger period. This cannot be stated too strongly; communication is a key component of human resources management.

7. As indicated in the case study, the amalgamation of school divisions will result in changing roles for central administrators, Boards of Education, trustees, principals, and teachers. Directors of Education may experience, if they have not already, a shift from directing to facilitating. Directors might be challenged with the task of providing leadership and culturally integrating an expanded and more diffuse constituency. As Boards of Education administer divisions which have increased in size both geographically and in student population, an increased emphasis on policy governance may well replace a "hands-on" approach to administration. This could result in further decentralization and changed roles and responsibilities for both principals and school trustees. In-school administrators may well see an expansion of their responsibilities and an increased expectation of accountability for a school's educational outcomes. The role of local school trustees will continue to evolve. Indeed, although direct representation is the preference of each community, at some point in time, Boards of Education may need to consider a redrawing of subdivision boundaries.

8. Multiple realities exist within school division amalgamations. The case study, in this instance, a study of one school division amalgamation process became, to some extent, three case studies which could each be viewed through their own particular sets of lenses. The first is the amalgamation story of the Beaver Flat subdivisions of Falkland and Spence, the second is the story of the Beaver Flat subdivision of Longford, and the third is the amalgamation story as understood by the Turnhill School Division. The Beaver Flat/Falkland/Spence story was primarily one of change and transition and its attending pain, frustration, stress, and anticipation of better things yet to come. The Beaver Flat/Longford/Ladybank story paralleled the Falkland/Spence experience with the added elements of "breaking free" and then being "cast adrift" without anyone at the helm to provide leadership and guide them through their transitions. Much of the Longford story and what happened to them subsequent to their decision to disjoin from Beaver Flat and amalgamate with the Ladybank School Division remains untold. The third story, that of the "new" Turnhill School Division, has just begun. The specific act of amalgamation brought about limited amounts of change within the division. However, since that time, the Turnhill Division has found itself caught within a spiral of accelerating change and, within that change, the experiences of multiple transitions for both individuals and groups. The integration of these two disparate school division cultures and subcultures will continue to evolve.

Implications and Recommendations

A number of implications and recommendations arise from this study in relation to the process and management of school division amalgamations. These are presented in three broad categories: implications for practice, implications for further research, and implications for theory.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study have implications for provincial and local governing authorities, amalgamating school divisions and steering committees, and professional staff. Findings from this study indicate that school division amalgamations are complex undertakings. As such, individuals directly involved in the amalgamation process would benefit from a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of mergers and acquisitions. Recognition of what merger typology is taking place within the amalgamation will assist in the strategic management of change and efforts to address issues which may arise as a result of the type of merger.

Most constituents of rural school divisions are well aware of the need to address the challenges facing rural education. Taking into account factors such as the numbers of students needed to provide a full service organization, the geographical and cultural nature of the region, the natural patterns of those living in that area, and continued economic decline, the restructuring of school division through amalgamation is a reasonable process to undertake. While completed amalgamations within the Province of Saskatchewan have to date been voluntary, it is to be hoped that not only do school divisions work with their partner(s) of choice, but that they also address the "bigger picture" and consider the circumstances of all adjacent school divisions. It is imperative that school divisions or subdivisions do not find themselves embroiled in one amalgamation after another; the stress on schools, communities, and individuals involved in an amalgamation and its aftermath is just too great. To this end, there is a continued need for direction and support

and the development of a provincial plan to assist those divisions both considering and undergoing amalgamations. Indeed, the electorate expects provincial direction; the perceived lack of provincial leadership is often viewed as an abdication of responsibility.

Although amalgamating subdivisions continue to prefer direct representation on Boards of Education, in the interests of Board size and efficient operation, amalgamated school divisions may well need to consider a redrawing of subdivision boundaries. Whether this occurs at the time of amalgamation or a later date, a realignment of subdivision boundaries has implications for board members. Board members will need to make a concentrated effort to address a greater diversity of interests and to keep in touch with their public.

Issues of equity such as the balanced distribution of resources and educational opportunity as provided to schools within a division need to be addressed. Several staff mentioned this issue with regard to differences between the "smaller, farther away and more rural" schools in the division and schools in closer proximity to the large urban center. Schools in close proximity to the urban center were perceived as having a greater degree of access to out-of-school programs, resources, and opportunities.

With regard to the process and management of school division amalgamations, the study supports what has been addressed in numerous writings on M & A's and implementing change. Consultation with stakeholder groups, including students, and the development of a clearly defined process which takes into account the identified concerns and findings is a necessity. Flexible time lines will allow for adequate time to investigate, assess, understand, and resolve amalgamation issues. The entire amalgamation process and information as to the what and why of decisions must be open to the scrutiny of both employees and other stakeholder groups. The inclusion of all stakeholder groups in the amalgamation process and the open, accurate, and timely dissemination of information will serve to reduce anxieties and prevent the negative backlash resulting from a perception of secrecy.

In addition to an amalgamation steering committee, it is recommended the amalgamating divisions consider the formation of a transition team which specifically focuses on the human side of the merger (Birkinshaw, 1999). Knowing about and understanding the three iterative phases of transition will empower individuals to assess where they are in the transition process and allow for the development of both personal and organizational strategies to reorient themselves to their new situation. The concept of transition should be addressed not only at the division level but also within each school community. Addressing issues of transition readiness and personal responses to change requires sensitivity and an acceptance that no one will be at exactly the same time and place in their personal journey of change. Transition management should continue after the completion of the amalgamation (Ireland & Hitt, 1998). This is particularly applicable to teacher groups, the Board of Education, students, and parents.

During this time of organizational change and transition, the leaders and managers of the amalgamation process should address issues of culture and community. Whether one culture is absorbed and/or integrated with another or efforts are made to develop a "new" culture, culture or the perception of culture is a powerful determinant as to the successful integration of the amalgamating divisions. Understanding the importance and power of culture can help leaders attend to the needs that individuals in the merging school divisions are sure to have in times of rapid change. Rapid change evokes powerful psychological responses on the part of many people (Bolman & Deal, 1997). In addition to respecting the cultural values of individual communities or communities within these communities, efforts need to be made to develop a sense of the new community, the "new" school division. This does not just happen; concerted efforts must be made to this end.

If trends of increasing decentralization continue, Directors may have to possess a new mixture of skills and responsibilities. As discussed by Conley (1997, pp. 77-84), these skills and responsibilities include being a visionary, planner, facilitator, boundary spanner,

communicator, dispute resolver, efficiency enhancer, coordinator, and standard setter. Directors "stand challenged to adapt, to develop new abilities, and to change some of their conceptions of power and leadership" (p. 84). It may be a difficult challenge for those used to being in charge.

Implications for Further Research

As the study progressed, it quicky became apparent that the perspective of M & A's and their application, as envisioned by the researcher, was an appropriate conceptual framework for describing the process and its management within the context of school division amalgamations. Nevertheless, a number of additional issues which merit investigation surfaced and will be briefly identified.

While the single case study approach proved to be particularly effective in studying the process and management of a school division amalgamation and allowed the researcher to adopt a holistic perspective of the phenomenon, multi-site studies should also be considered. Using a larger sample may provide a broader spectrum of concerns and strategies and, as a result, be more generalizable to other situations. In addition, the use of a single researcher as compared to multiple researchers needs comparative study. Data overload and the tremendous amount of work involved in data reduction, display and analysis need attention and refinement.

A study of amalgamated school divisions within the province would serve to determine the effect of amalgamation on the quality and delivery of educational programs.

An investigation into the effects of school division amalgamation on the changing roles and responsibilities of Boards of Education and local school trustees would assist school divisions in their own evolution of roles and responsibilities.

Investigation into integration strategies with regard to community and culture would provide valuable information to those undertaking school division amalgamations.

Research into school division amalgamation processes which took place under other circumstances—for example, research into the amalgamation of three or more divisions, would serve to identify issues which are specific to their own circumstance, issues which did not surface within the parameters of this study.

Investigation into transition management in amalgamated school divisions could identify factors that favor such an approach as well as yield some insights into the relationship between transition management and integration success. This could be particularly useful to teachers involved in the complexities of an amalgamation process.

A study of the effects of amalgamation on central office staff and the provision of services with specific attention to the Director's changing role of leadership and the delivery of consultant support would provide some insight into the challenges of educational leadership and leadership strategies.

Research into the effects of amalgamation on school administrators could serve to identify methods of support which would benefit principals and staff.

A study of rural schools, their needs, and how schools and communities are crossing the traditional boundaries that have separated them could serve to identify ways to enhance the school/community connection.

Implications for Theory

General acknowledgment that change is a process, not an event, has had a definite impact on how organizations approach change in the form of mergers and acquisitions or, as in this case, school division amalgamations. Change has traditionally been presented in terms of either a technical, political, or cultural approach (Tichy, 1983; Tichy & Devanna, 1986). While the emphasis on the strategic management of change through attention to the three aspects remains, there has been a significant move to paying increased attention to the cultural perspective (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Bridges, 1992; Buono & Bowditch, 1989; Conley, 1997; Miles, 1980). This emerging view suggests that any theoretical

consideration of organizational integration needs to be conceptualized within a holistic framework which acknowledges the complexity of the merger process.

The conceptual framework, based upon a review of literature on business M & A's and educational change, was found to be of significant benefit to the analysis and reconstruction of the amalgamation process and its management. Adopting an organizational perspective of planned and managed second-order change, the conceptual framework drew upon Levy's (1986) driving forces for change; House's (1981) and Tichy's (1983) conceptualization of change as occurring within and between technical, political, and cultural systems; and Bridges' (1986, 1991, 1992) iterative phases of transition— a human perspective.

The conceptual framework which guided the study and the application that could be made from it to the amalgamation process and its management prompted the researcher to develop a model which depicts organizational perspectives of school division mergers as a planned second-order change (see Figure 1). Influenced by both changing and stable contextual parameters within our environment, we find problem, policy and political streams (Kingdon, cited in Sabatier, 1991) which, at various points in time, intersect to open windows of opportunity for educational governance reform. Within these windows one can identify the driving forces for educational change (Levy, 1986). Consisting of permitting, enabling, precipitating, and triggering forces, the driving forces for educational governance reform combine in a dynamic mix, the result being an amalgamation of school divisions.

The amalgamation of schools divisions can be compared to a horizontal merger (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) and, as with any merger, one needs to address concerns with regard to both strategic and organizational fit (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). A horizontal merger is generally viewed as either a collaborative effort or an organizational rescue (Pritchett, 1985), or a combination of the two; how it is viewed may well depend upon

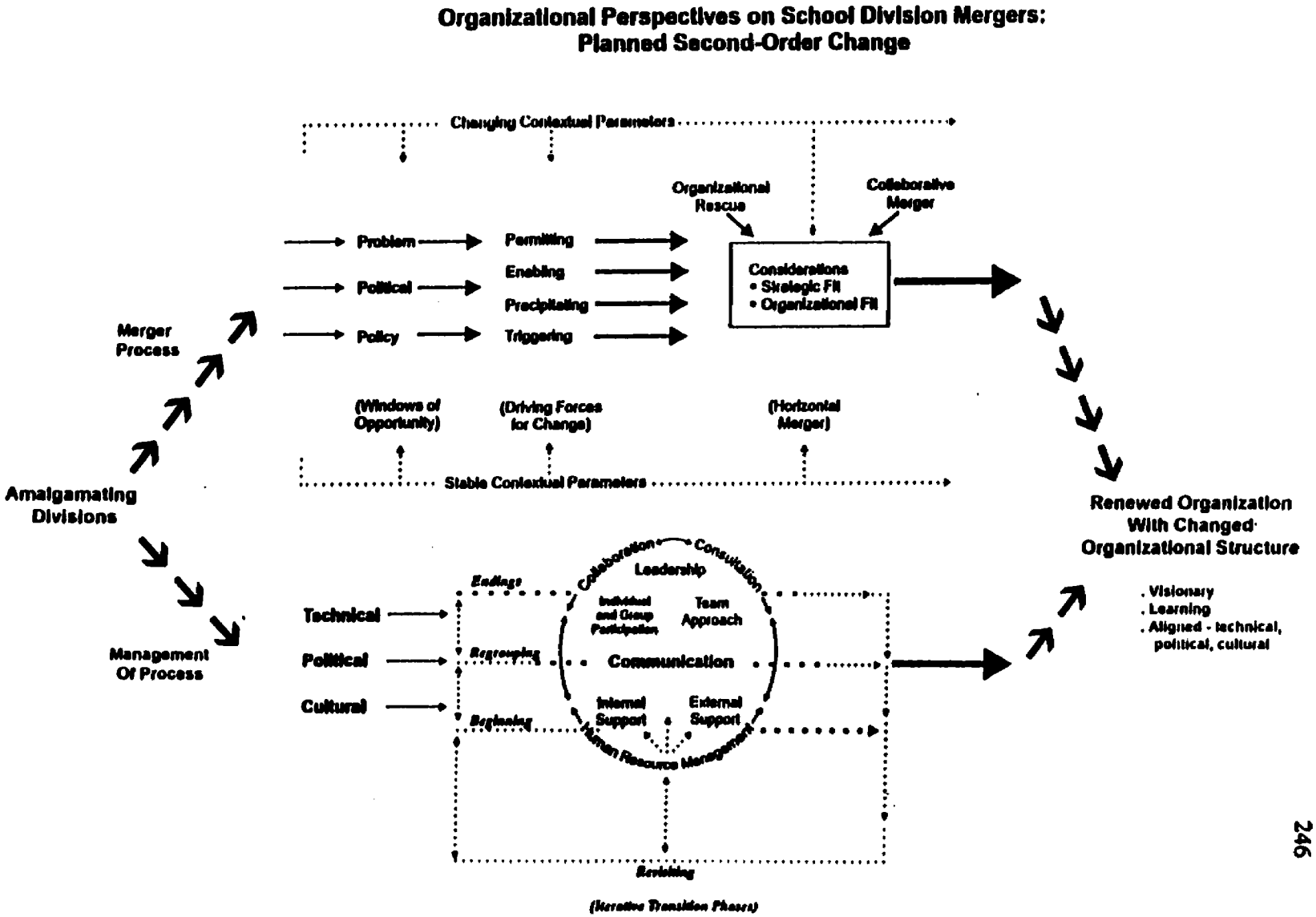

Figure 1. Organizational perspectives on school division mergers: Planned second-order change.

which side of the fence you are sitting on. The amalgamation or horizontal merger of school divisions results in a changed organizational structure.

Managing a school division amalgamation process involves attention to change management and resistance to change. During the merger process, the management of planned second-order change focuses on the technical, political, and cultural aspects of organizations (Tichy, 1983). Technical issues include the resolution of differences in employee benefits, policy, mill rates, and the division of assets as well as organizational design, costs of amalgamation, and technical resources. Political problems include the need for mechanisms to resolve disputes, conflicts arising from government policy and regulations, budget allocations, the distribution of power and influence, and accession decisions. Cultural aspects include individual and group transition management (Bridges, 1992) and the integration of cultures at both division and school levels (Marks & Mirvis, 1992).

Collaboration and consultation are paramount to success when one is grappling with technical, political and cultural issues as well as with issues of human resource management. Additional important elements to merger management involve leadership, individual and group participation, a team approach to problem-solving, and both internal and external support. Throughout the management of a merger process and key to its success is the need for open, continuous and complete *communication*. At the end of the process is a renewed organization which is visionary, learning, and technically, politically, and culturally aligned.

In addition, throughout the amalgamation, a process of transition is taking place among those involved in and affected by the change. Individuals are moving, in various stages and at their own pace, through the iterative phases of organizational transition, namely, endings, regrouping and beginnings (Bridges, 1986, 1991, 1992). (Note the arrows in Figure 1 which indicate the emphasis each phase receives during the transition time as well as the revisiting component.)

It is the researcher's opinion that the conceptual framework which guided this study can stand on its own merit. However, having said that, the researcher proposes that the *cultural aspect of planned strategic change* and *the iterative phases of transition* be given a greater degree of prominence in the conceptualization of planned second-order change through the amalgamation of school divisions. Indeed, the need for attention to transitions and the merging of cultures is applicable not only to school division amalgamations. The management of planned change is equally significant to governance reform within other public and private institutions. For example, increased attention to transition management would have been of benefit to the recent amalgamation of health districts. Furthermore, current discussions regarding the possible amalgamation of rural municipalities accentuates the importance of transition management. Organizations are human constructs and, as such, should reflect the culture(s) of those who are part of the organization. Change and the ensuing transitions individuals experience as a result of change are constants in the evolution of organizations. Attention to the "human side of amalgamations" will result in new and renewed organizations which are visionary, learning, and aligned—*culturally*, technically, and politically.

The importance of the conceptual framework adopted for this study is not in the discrete categories or their location within the context of a school division amalgamation process. Rather, it is the relationships that exist among the categories that is notable. The strength of the framework for this study was its usefulness in accounting for and describing the dynamics of school division amalgamations. In addition, the study represents a critical testing of existing theory, particularly in the area of organizational change, mergers and acquisitions, and the management of the process as well as demonstrating the merit of applying this body of knowledge to school division amalgamation.

The study of organizational change in the form of school division amalgamation is, when all is said and done, a case study of how people come together, form communities,

develop cultures and, in doing so, make meaning of their world. When their world is substantially altered, adjustments need to be made. Transition is a constant in the life of school divisions, communities, and individuals. Addressing change from a theoretical perspective which puts an increased emphasis on human resources management is to put practice into theory and theory back into practice.

Epilogue

It is two and one-half years since the amalgamation of Turnhill and Beaver Flat. During this time I have communicated, on occasion, with various individuals who were part of the amalgamation process and opinions on the effects of amalgamation are still as varied as ever. This is not surprising, for each individual is looking at it through their own particular lenses, their own realities. The amalgamation was undertaken with a view to do what was "best for the kids" and the former students of Beaver Flat School Division are benefitting from the broader base of specialized support personnel and resources. In the words of one individual, "The easy part was the kids and staffs. Our teachers are professionals and they've gotten down to the job-at-hand and are working together." Paradoxically, I've also had the comment, "There's still a lot of work to be done to bring us together, we still feel like we're not part of the group, it's hard to break into established cliques." The division and their teachers have recently negotiated a two-year local agreement through the venue of interest-based bargaining.

Interestingly enough, making the transition has, perhaps, been most difficult for the eleven-member Board of Education. The Beaver Flat Board's history is one of a "hands-on" approach, being directly involved in the affairs of their schools, and having a strong administrative culture. On the other hand, Turnhill's approach is oriented toward the ideology of governance and policy-making. The harmonizing of the two disparate Board cultures continues to be a challenge. When all is said and done, the "highs and lows" of

school division amalgamation, as experienced by the people of Turnhill and Beaver Flat, are truly indicative of how complex and changeable life in rural Saskatchewan has become.

As we stand at the cusp of the new millennium, life will continue to be turbulent, full of uncertainties, and fraught with a multitude of complex, continuous, and accelerating changes. Andy Hargreaves, a contemporary educational thinker, wrote, "Every change involves a choice [of path and] which choices we make will ultimately depend on the depth of [our] understanding,...the creativity of our strategies, the courage of our convictions, and the direction of our values" (1994, p. 18). Understanding the context, process and consequences of change, such as change brought about by the amalgamation of school divisions, helps us to clarify and question our choices. It is my hope this study will, to some degree, result in an enhanced understanding of the complexities and dynamics inherent in school division amalgamations.

> Life doesn't follow straight-line logic; it conforms to a kind of curved logic that changes the nature of things and often turns them into their opposites. Problems then, are not just hassles to be dealt with and set aside. Lurking inside each problem is a workshop on the nature of organizations and a vehicle for personal growth. This entails a shift; we need to value the *process* of finding the solution—juggling the inconsistencies that meaningful solutions entail.
>
> —Pascale, 1990, p.263

REFERENCES

AEL (Appalachian Educational Laboratory. (1966). *Five rural themes* [Rural Specialty]. Author. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from the World Wide Web: http://www.ael.org/rel/rural/rurlthem.htm

Adams, J. D., & Spencer, S. A. (1988). People in transition. *Training & Development Journal, 42* (10), 61-63.

Albrecht, K. (1994). *The northbound train: Finding the purpose, setting the direction, shaping the destiny of your organization*. New York: AMACOM.

Allison, G. T. (1969). Conceptual models and the Cuban missile crisis. *American Political Science Review, 63*, 690-710.

Anderson, A. H., & Kyprianou, A. (1994). *Effective Organizational Behaviour*. Oxford: Beaver Blackwell.

Argyris, C., & Schon, D. (1978). *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Astrachan, J. H. (1990). *Mergers, acquisitions, and employee anxiety: A study of separation anxiety in a corporate context*. New York: Praeger.

Bardwick, J. M. (1996). Peacetime management and wartime leadership. In F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, & R. Beckhard (Eds.), *The leader of the future* (pp. 131-140). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bennis, W. G. (1999). The end of leadership: Exemplary leadership is impossible without full inclusion, initiatives, and cooperation of followers. *Organizational Dynamics, 27*(1), pp. 71+. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A55144556 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Bennis, W. G., Benne, K., & Chin, R. (1969). *The planning of change*. (2nd ed.) New York: Holt, Rhinehart, & Wilson.

Bennis, W. G., & Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: Strategies for taking charge*. New York: Harper Collins.

Birkinshaw, J. (1999). Acquiring intellect: Managing the integration of knowledge-intensive acquisitions. *Business Horizons, 42*(3), pp. 33+. Retrieved September 27, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A55083928 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Blake, R. R., & Mouton, J. (1985). How to achieve integration on the human side of mergers. *Organizational Dynamics, 13* (3), 41-56.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Boland, J. R. (1970). Merger planning: How much weight do personnel factors carry? *Personnel Journal, 47* (2), 8-13.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1995). *Leading with soul: An uncommon journey of spirit.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1997). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Borg, W. R., & Gall, M. D. (1989). *Educational research: An introduction* (5th ed.). New York: Longman.

Braun, C. (1996). *Applied concepts for facilitating a learning community.* Unpublished master's thesis. University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Bridges, W. B. (1986). Managing organizational transitions. *Organizational Dynamics, 15* (1), 24-33.

Bridges, W. B. (1991). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Bridges, W. B. (1992). *Surviving corporate transition.* Mill Valley, CA: Bridges & Associates.

Bridges, W. B. (1996). Leading the de-jobbed organization. In F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, & R. Beckhard (Eds.), *The leader of the future* (pp. 11-18). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Buono, A. F. (1997). Reengineering partnerships: Process intervention in strategic alliances. *SAM advanced Management Journal, 62*(2), p. 21. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A21272161 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Buono, A. F., & Bowditch, J. L. (1989). *The human side of mergers and acquisitions: Managing collisions between people and organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis.* Newcastle Upon Tyne, England: Athenaeum.

Carey, M. A. (1994). The group effect in focus groups: Planning, implementing, and interpreting focus group research. In J. M. Morse (Ed.), *Critical issues in qualitative research methods* (pp. 225-241). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Carruthers, J. (1990). A rationale for the use of semi-structured interviews. *Journal of Educational Administration, 28* (1), 63-68.

Cartwright, S., & Cooper, C. L.(1994). The human effects of mergers and acquisitions. In C. L. Cooper, & D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *Trends in organizational behavior* (pp. 47-62). New York: Wiley.

Carver, J. (1990). *Boards that make a difference.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Clark, J., & Koonce, R. (1995). Engaging organizational survivors. *Training & Development Journal, 49* (3), 23-30.

Clemente, M. N., & Greenspan, D. S. (1999). Mergers and acquisitions: Preventing culture clash. *Human Resource Focus, 76*(2), pp. 9+. Retrieved July 1, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A54386647 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Conley, D. T. (1993). *Restructuring schools : Educators adapt to a changing world.* Eugene, OR: Eric Clearinghouse on Educational Management. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED328954)

Conley, D. T. (1997). *Roadmap to restructuring: Charting the course of change in American education* (2nd ed.). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse.

Corbett, H. D., & Rossman, G. B. (1989). Three paths to implementing change: A resource note. *Curriculum Inquiry, 19,* (2), 163-190.

Covey, S. R. (1992). *Principle-centered leadership.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative & quantitative approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cross Canada Chart. (1999). *Education governance in Canada: Trends and implications. CEPAN.* Retrieved July 8, 1999 on the World Wide Web: http://www.cepan.ca

Cuban, L. (1988). Why do some reforms persist? *Educational Administration Quarterly, 24*, 329-335.

Davenport. T. O. (1998). The integration challenge. *Management Review, 87*(1), pp. 25+. Retrieved September 27, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A20359504 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Davy, J. A., Kinicki, A., Kilroy, J., & Scheck, C. (1988). After the merger: Dealing with people's uncertainty. *Training & Development Journal, 42* (11), 57-61.

De Bono, E. (1971). *Lateral thinking for management.* New York: American Management Association.

Dempsey, V. & McCadden, B. (1997). Power and the construction of meaning in school policy. In In J. Paul, N. Berger, P. Osnes, Y. Martinez, & W. Morse (Eds.), *Ethics and decision making in local schools.* Baltimore, MA: P. H. Brooks Publishing.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, T. S. (1994). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-18). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Donaldson, J., & Sheldrake, J. (1990). The parameters of ethical decision-making in organizations. In G. Enderle, B. Almond, & A. Argandona (Eds.), *People in corporations: Ethical responsibilities and corporate effectiveness* (pp. 69-76). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer.

Economic Service Bulletin. (1994). Vancouver, BC: British Columbia Teachers' Federation, *3*, 1-14.

The Economist. (1999). How to make mergers work. *The Economist, 350*(8101), p.15. Retrieved July 1, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A53598845 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

The Education Act. (1978). Regina, SK: King's Printer.

The Education Act. (1995). Regina, SK: King's Printer.

Eisner, E. W. (1998). *The enlightened eye: qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Epstein, J. L. (1997). School/family/community partnerships. In M. Fullan (Ed.), *The challenge of school change* (pp. 253-284). Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight.

Fetterman, D. M. (1982). Ethnography in educational research: The dynamics of diffusion. *Educational Researcher, 11* (3), 17-22, 29.

Fetterman, D. M. (1988). Qualitative approaches to evaluating education. *Educational Researcher, 17* (8), 17-23.

Fleming. T. (1997). *Provincial initiatives to restructure Canadian school governance in the 1990s* [Paper]. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from the World Wide Web: http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/abbre1.htm

Foght, H. W. (1918). *A survey of education in the Province of Saskatchewan: Report to the Government.* Regina, SK: King's Printer.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (1994). Interviewing: The art of science. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 361-376). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Foot, D. K., & Stoffman, D. (1999). *Boom, bust and echo 2000: Profiting from the demographic shift in the new millennium* (Rev. Ed.). North York, ON: Stoddart.

Frye, M. (1991). 'Who walked among the stones of fire?': A 21st century perception of ethics for the individual, the community and the RSA. *BSA Journal,* December, 17-30.

Fullan, M. G. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Fullan, M. G. (1996). Turning systemic thinking on its head. *Phi Delta Kappen, 77*(6), pp. 420+. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A18084238 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Fullan, M. G. (1997). Leadership for change. In M. Fullan (Ed.), *The challenge of school change* (pp. 86-115). Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight.

Fullan, M. G. (1998). Breaking the bonds of dependency. *Educational Leadership, 55*(6), pp. 6+. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A20607166 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Fullan, M. G., & Miles, M. B. (1992). Getting reform right: What works and what doesn't. *Phi Delta Kappan, 74,* 745-752.

Funk, J. (1971). *The origin and development of consolidated school districts in Saskatchewan.* Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.

Gabarro, J. J. (1987). *The dynamics of taking charge.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Gage Canadian Dictionary. (1983). Toronto: Gage.

Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction* (6th ed.). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Galosy, J. R. (1990). The human factor in mergers and acquisitions. *Training & Development Journal,* 44 (4), 90-95.

Galsworthy, J. (1933). *Over the river.* London: Heineman.

Gardner, J. W. (1990). *On leadership.* New York: Free Press.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory.* Chicago: Aldine.

Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction.* New York: Longman.

Government of Saskatchewan. (1947) *The school act, the larger units act and the school grants act.* Regina: SK: King's Printer.

Government of Saskatchewan. (1998). *More school divisions successfully restructure* [Government News Release 421]. Retrieved October 1, 1999 from the World Wide Web: http://www.gov.sk.ca/newsrel/

Grabow & Heskin, A. (1973). Foundations for a radical concept of planning. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners,* March, 472-483.

Green, B., & Pierce, M. (1997). Educational governance in Canada: Trends and implications. CSBA. Retrieved July 8, 1999 from the World Wide Web: http://www.cdnsba.org/govern/trends.htm

Greenleaf, R. K. (1973). *The servant as leader.* Newton Center, MA: Greenleaf Center.

Greiner, L. (1972). Evolution and revolution as organizations grow. *Harvard Business Review, 50* (4), 39-46.

Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness on naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Communication and Technology: A Journal of Theory, Research and Development, 29* (2), 75- 91.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1982). Epistomological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry. *Educational Communications and Technology Journal, 30,* 233-252.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gulka, W. A. (1992). *Managing multiple changes is rural school divisions—The director's role.* Unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Saskatchewan Saskatoon, SK.

Haller, E. J., & Monk, D. H. (1988). New reforms, old reforms, and the consolidation of small rural schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 24* (4), 470-483.

Halpern, P. (1983). Corporate acquisitions: A theory of special cases? A review of event studies applied to acquisitions. *Journal of Finance, 38,* 297-317.

Hammersley, M. (1992). *What's wrong with ethnography? Methodological explorations.* London: Routledge.

Handy, C. (1989). *The age of unreason.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Handy, C. (1996). The new language of organizing and its implications for leaders. In F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, & R. Beckhard (Eds.), *The leader of the future* (pp. 3-10). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: Teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age.* Toronto: Oise Press.

Hargreaves, A. (1997). Cultures of teaching and educational change. In M. Fullan (Ed.), *The challenge of school change* (pp. 57-84). Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight.

Hayes, C. (1997). Surviving a merger: How to make the cut and thrive after corporate matrimony. *Black Enterprise, 27*(11), p. 76. Retrieved July 1, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A19470424 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Heifetz, M. L. (1993). *Leading change, overcoming chaos: A seven-stage process for making change succeed in your organization.* Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Helgesen, S. (1995). *The web of inclusion: A new architecture for building great organizations.* New York: Currency/Doubleday.

Helgesen, S. (1996). Leading from the grass roots. In F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, & R. Beckhard (Eds.), *The leader of the future* (pp. 19-24). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Herman, R. (1999). The changing role of leadership. *Gifts and Decorative Assessories, 100*(6), p. 264. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A55129099 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Herriott, R. E., & Firestone, W. A. (1983). Multisite qualitative policy research: Optimizing description and generalizability. *Educational Researcher, 12* (2), 4-19.

Hesselbein, F. (1996). The "how to be" leader. In F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, & R. Beckhard (Eds.), *The leader of the future* (pp. 121-124). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. .

Hesselbein, F., & Cohen, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Leader to leader: Enduring insights on leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hesselbein, F., Goldsmith M., & Beckhard, R. (Eds.). (1996). *The leader of the future.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hinkley, S. R. (1985). A closer look at participation. *Organizational Dynamics, 13* (3), 57-67.

Hirsch, P. (1987). *Pack your own parachute: How to survive mergers, acquisitions, and other corporate disasters.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Hitt, M., Keats, B., Harback, H., & Nixon, R. (1994). Rightsizing: Building and maintaining strategic leadership and long-term competitiveness. *Organizational Dynamics, 23* (2), 18-32.

Hodder, I. (1994). The interpretation of documents and material culture. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research.* (pp. 393-402). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hodgkinson, C. (1991). *Educational leadership: The moral art.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Hooper, A., & Potter, J. (1999) Take it from the top. *People Management, 5*(16), p. 46. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A55665533 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Hopkins, T. H. (1983). *Mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures: A guide to their impact for investors and directors.* Homewood, IL: Dow Jones-Irwin.

House, E. R. (1981). Three perspectives on innovation: Technical, political, and cultural. In R. Lehming & M. Kane (Eds.), *Improving schools: Using what we know.* (pp. 17-41). London: Sage.

Howley, C. B., & Harmon, H. (1996). *The rural experience of nation-building: Implications for educational research and school improvement in the latest era of "globalization."*[Paper]. Retrieved July 8, 1999 from the World Wide Web: http://www.ael.org/rel/rural/papers/debasemt.htm

Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (1984). *Innovation up close: How school improvement works.* New York: Plenum.

Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (1994). Data management and analysis methods. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research.* (pp. 428-443). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hunt, J. G. (1991). *Leadership: A new* synthesis. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Ireland, R. D., & Hitt, M. A. (1998). Achieving and managing strategic competitiveness in the 21st century: the role of strategy leadership. *The Academy of Management Executive, 13*(1), pp. 43+. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A54169128 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Ivancevich, J. M., Schweiger, D. M., & Power, F. R. (1987). Strategies for managing human resources during mergers and acquisitions. *Human Resource Planning Journal, 10* (1), 19-35.

Jacoby, N. H. (1936). *Report of the commission of inquiry into provincial and municipal taxation.* Regina, SK: King's Printer.

Jemison, D. B., & Sitkin, S. B. (1996). Corporate acquisitions: A process perspective. *Academy of Management Review, 11* (1), 145-163.

Jick, T. D. (1996). Accelerating change for competitive advantage. *Organizational Dynamics,* Spring, 77-82.

Jones, B. L., & Maloy, R. W. (1988). *Partnerships for improving schools.* New York: Greenwood Press.

Kanter, R. M. (1983). *The change masters: Innovations for productivity in the American Corporation.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kanter, R. M. (1996). World-class leaders: The power of partnering. In F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, & R. Beckhard (Eds.), *The leader of the future* (pp. 89-98). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 98

Keidel, R. W. (1994). Rethinking organizational design. *Academy of Management Executive, 8* (4), 12-27.

Kerfoot, K. (1998). The "me" disease. *Nursing Economics,* November, 1998, p. 313. Retrieved July 1, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A53280333 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Kessler, A. (1999). Worry-free mergers. *Bank Marketing, 31*(2), p. 10. Retrieved September 6, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A54141078 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Kindler, H. S. (1979). Two planning strategies: Incremental change and transformational change. *Group and Organization Studies, 4,* 476-484.

Kotter, J. P. (1988). *The leadership factor.* New York: Free Press.

Kubler-Ross, E. (1969). *On death and dying.* New York: MacMillan.

Bl

Kuhn, T. (1970).*The structure of scientific revolution* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage.

Laabs, J. (1999). What does it take to be a great HR leader? *Workforce, 78*(2), pp. 27+. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A54102691 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Lancy, D. F. (1993). *Qualitative research in education: An introduction to the major traditions.* New York: Longman.

Langlois, H. D., & Scharf, M. P. (1991). *School finance and governance review: Final report.* Regina, SK: School Finance and Governance Review.

LaRoque, L. (1986). Policy implementation in a school district: A multiperspective approach. *Canadian Journal of Education, 11* (4), 486-508.

Lawrie, J. (1990). The ABCs of change management. *Training & Development Journal, 44* (3), 87-89.

Le Compte, M. D., & Goetz, G. D. (1982). Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research. *Review of Educational Research, 52* (1), 31-60.

Legare, T. L. (1998). The human side of mergers and acquisitions: understanding and managing human resource integration issues. *Human Resource Planning, 21*(1), pp. 32+. Retrieved September 27, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A20872995 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Leonard, B. (1999). Will this marriage work? *Human Resource Magazine, 44*, i4, 34+. Retrieved September 27, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A54545822 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Levin, H. (1976). Educational reform: Its meaning. In M. Carnoy & H. Levin (Eds.). *The limits of educational reform* (pp. 107-210). New York: McKay.

Levinson, H., & Rosenthal, S. (1984). *CEO: Corporate leadership in action.* New York: Basic Books.

Levy, A. (1986). Second-order planned change: Definition and conceptualization. *Organizational Dynamics, 15* (1), 5-20.

Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). *Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research.* Keynote address presented at the Annual Meeting, American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 18-22.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Newbury Park: Sage

Lindblom, C. (1959). The science of muddling through. *Public Administration Review, 21*, 78-88.

Lorde, Audre. (1978). *Uses of the erotic: The erotic as power.* Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.

Lubatkin, M. (1983). Mergers and the performance of the acquiring firm. *Academy of Management Review, 8*, 218-225.

Lundberg, C. C. (1984). Strategies for organizational transitioning. In J. R. Kimberly & R. E. Quinn (Eds.). *New futures: The challenge of managing corporate transitions* (pp. 60-84). Homewood, IL: Dow Jones-Irwin.

Marino, S. (1999). The difference between managing and leading. *Industry Week, 248*(11), p. 10. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A54842277 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Marks, M. L. (1982). Merging human resources. *Mergers and Acquisitions, 17* (2), 38-43.

Marks, M. L., & Mirvis, P. H. (1986). The merger syndrome. *Psychology Today, 20* (2), 36-42.

Marks, M. L., & Mirvis, P. H. (1992). Rebuilding after merger: Dealing with "survivor sickness." *Organizational Dynamics, 21* (2), 18-32.

Marks, M. L., & Mirvis, P. H. (1997). Revisiting the merger syndrome: Dealing with stress. *Mergers and Acquisitions, 31*(6), pp. 1-10. Retrieved October 19, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Business Index/A19603002 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1995). *Designing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McCalman, J., & Paton, R. A. (1992). *Change management: A guide to effective implementation.* London: Chapman.

McCann, J. E., & Gilkey, R. (1988). Joining forces: Creating and managing successful mergers and acquisitions. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

McDermott, L. C. (1992). *Caught in the middle.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

McKnight, R., & Thompson, M. (1990). Navigating organizational change. *Training & Development Journal, 44* (12), 46-49.

McManus, M. L., & Hergert, M. L. (1988). *Surviving merger and acquisition.* Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merton, R., Fiske, M., & Kendall, P. (1990). *The focused interview: A manual of problems and procedures* (2nd ed.) New York: Free Press.

Metz, E. J. (1986). Managing change toward a leading-edge information culture. *Organizational Dynamics, 15* (2), 28-40.

Miles, R. H., & Snow, C. (1995). The new network firm: A spherical structure built on a human investment philosophy. *Organizational Dynamics, 23* (4), 5-18.

Miller, B. A. (1996). *The role of rural schools in rural community development.* Retrieved July 8, 1999 from ERIC database (#ED384479 95) on the World Wide Web: http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed384479.html

Mirvis, P. H. (1985). Negotiations after the sale: The roots and ramifications of conflict in an acquisition. *Journal of Occupational Behaviour, 6* (1), 65-84.

Mirvis, P. H., & Marks, M. L. (1992). *Managing the merger.* London: Prentice Hall.

Mitchell, C. (1994). *School board amalgamation: A review of the literature.* Unpublished paper. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.

Monk, D. H., & Haller, E. J. (1986). *Organizational alternatives for small rural schools: Final report to the legislature of the state of New York.* Ithaca, NY: State University of New York. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 281 694)

Moore, K., & Loder, R. (1997). *Governance for education: A matter of process not structure*. Paper presented at the 2nd National Congress on Rural Education, Saskatoon, SK, March, 1997.

Nachtigal, P. (1982). Education in rural America: An overview. In P. Nachtigal (Ed.), *Rural education: In search of a better way* (pp. 15-24). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Nahavandi, A., & Aranda, E. (1994). Restructuring teams for the re-engineered organization. *Academy of Management Executive, 8* (4), 58-68.

Napier, N. K. (1989). Mergers and acquisitions, human resource issues and outcomes: A review and suggested typology. *Journal of Management Studies, 26*, 271-289.

Nash, L. L. (1999). Creating a larger context. *Across the board, 36*(4), p. 21. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A54405397 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Nevis, E. C., Lancourt, J., & Vassallo, H. G. (1996). *Intentional revolutions: A seven-point strategy for transforming organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Olie, R. (1994). Shades of culture and institutions in international mergers. *Organization Studies, 15*, 382-405.

Ouchi, W. G., & Wilkins, A. L. (1985). Organizational culture. *Annual Review of Sociology, 11*, 457-483.

Owens, R. G. (1982). Methodological perspective: Methodological rigor in naturalistic inquiry: Some issues and answers. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 18* (2), 1-21.

Pappanastus, J., Hillman, L., & Cole, P. (1987). The human resource side of mergers. *Business*, July-September, 3-11.

Pascale, P. (1990). *Managing on the edge: How the smartest companies use conflict to stay ahead.* New York: Touchstone.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Perry, L. T. (1986). Merging successfully: Sending the right signals. *Sloan Management Review, 27* (3), 47-57.

Pettigrew, A. M. (1979). On studying organizational culture. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 24*, 570-581.

Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. (1978). *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective.* New York: Harper & Row.

Phillips, L. (1997). *A community perspective of schooling.* Paper presented at the 3rd National Congress on Rural Education, Saskatoon, SK, March, 1997.

Pitts, R. A. (1976). Diversification strategies and organizational policies of large diversified firms. *Journal of Economics and Business, 28*, 181-188.

Pritchett, P. (1985). *After the merger: Managing the shock waves.* Homewood, IL: Dow Jones- Irwin.

Pritchett, P. (1987). *Making mergers work.* Homewood, IL: Dow Jones-Irwin.

Profusek, R. A., & Leavitt, J. S. (1984). Dealing with employee benefit plans. *Mergers and Acquisitions, 18* (4), 44-51.

Quantz, R. A. (1992). On critical ethnography (with some postmodern considerations). In M. D. Le Compte, W. L. Millroy, & J. Preissle (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 447-505). New York: Oxford University Press.

Quinn, R. E., & Kimberley, J. R. (1984). Paradox, planning, and perseverance: Guidelines for managerial practice. In J. R. Kimberly & R. E. Quinn (Eds.). *New futures: The challenge of managing corporate transitions* (pp. 295-313). Homewood, IL: Dow Jones Irwin.

Randolph, W. A. (1995). Navigating the journey to empowerment. *Organizational Dynamics, 23* (4), 19-32.

Reddyk, M. (1995). *School division amalgamation in Saskatchewan: An investigation of stakeholder perceptions.* Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.

Reger, R. K., Mullane, J. V., Gustafson, L. T., & DeMarie, S. M. (1994). Creating earthquakes to change organizational mindsets. *Academy of Management Executive, 8* (4), 31-43.

Rhoades, S. A. (1983). *Power, empire building, and mergers.* Lexington, MA: Lexington.

Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Lifesst. (1956). *Rural Education* (Report No. 6). Regina, SK: King's Printer.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, . S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sabatier, P. A. (1991). Toward better theories of the policy process. *Political Science & Politics (24)*, 2, 144-156.

Sackney, L. E., & Dibski, D. J. (1994). Collaborative school cultures under school-based management: Reality or myth? [Paper]. Presented at the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement, Australia, January, 1994.

Sarason, S. (1990). *The predictable failure of educational reform: Can we change course before it is too late?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association. (1993). *Task force on educational governance: Final report.* Regina, SK: Author.

Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association. (1997). *Governance update* [Paper]. Retrieved July 8, 1999 on the World Wide Web: http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/governance.htm

Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association. (1998). *What are the challenges for K-12 education in Saskatchewan?* [Paper]. Retrieved July 8, 1999 on the World Wide Web: http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research//governance/challenges.htm

Schneider, B., Brief, A. P., & Guzzo, R. A. (1996). Creating a climate and culture for sustainable organizational change. *Organizational Dynamics,* Spring, 7-19.

Schneider, B., Gunnarson, S. K., & Niles-Jolly, K. (1994). Creating the climate and culture of success. *Organizational Dynamics, 23* (1), 17-28.

Schulman, L. S. (1988). Introduction: Ways of seeing, ways of knowing. In R. M. Jaeger (Ed.), *Complementary methods for research in education.* (pp. 21-23). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Schwandt, T. A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research.* (pp. 118-137). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schweiger, D. L., & Ivancevich, J. M. (1987). Human resources: The forgotten factor in mergers and acquisitions. *Personnel Administrator, 30* (11), 47-61.

Secord, J. P. (1996). How to lead a company in transition: four basic principles helped staff survive the trauma of three takeovers in 16 months. *Folio: the magazine for magazine management, 25*(13), p. 47. Retrieved July 1, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A18682153 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

The Secondary Education Act. (1907). Regina, SK: King's Printer.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization.* New York: Currency/Doubleday.

Senge, P. M. (1996). Leading learning organizations: The bold, the powerful, and the invisible. In F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, & R. Beckhard (Eds.), *The leader of the future* (pp. 41-58). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1987). *The principalship: A reflective practice perspective.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1996). *Building community in schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Serieyx, H. (1993). *Le big bang des organisations* [The organizational big bang]. Paris: Calmann-Levy.

Shein, E. H. (1983). The role of the founder in creating organizational culture. *Organizational Dynamics,* Summer, 13-28.

Sheldon, A. (1980). Organizational paradigms: A theory of organizational change. *Organizational Dynamics,* Winter, 61-80.

Shore, L. M., & Tetrick, L. E. (1994). The psychological contract as an explanatory framework in the employment relationship. In C. L. Cooper & D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *Trends in organizational behavior* (pp. 92-109). New York: Wiley.

Sirower, M. L. (1998). Constructing a synergistic base for premier deals. *Mergers & Acquisitions, 32*(6), pp. 42+. Retrieved September 27, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A20902097 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Skibbins, G. J. (1974). *Organizational evolution, a program for managing radical change.* New York: AMACOM.

Smith, K. K. (1982). Philosophical problems in thinking about organizational change. In P. S. Goodman & Associates (Eds.), *Change in organizations: New perspectives on theory, research, and practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Spreitzer, G. M., De Janasz, S. C., & Quinn, R. E. (1999). Empowered to lead: The role of psychological empowerment in leadership. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 20*(4), p. 511. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A55472505 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Stabler, J. C., & Olfert, M. R. (1996). *The changing role of rural communities in an urbanizing world: Saskatchewan–an update to 1995.* Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center.

Stabler, J. C., Olfert, M.. R., & Fulton, M. (1992). *The changing role of rural communities in an urbanizing world: Saskatchewan 1961-1990.* Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center.

Stabler, J. C., Olfert, M. R., & Greuel, J. B.(1996). Spatial labor markets and the rural labor force. *Growth and Change, (27)*, pp. 206-230.

Stake, R. E. (1984). Case study methods in educational research: Seeking sweet water. In R. M. Jaeger (Ed.), *Complementary methods for research in education* (pp. 253-278). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Society.

Stake, R. E. (1988). Case study methods in educational research: Seeking sweet water. In R. M. Jaeger (Ed.), *Complementary methods for research in education.* (pp. 253-265). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Stake, R. E. (1994). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 236-247). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Statistics Canada.1996. Urban and Rural Population Counts. Table 15. Retrieved July 12, 1999, from the World Wide Web: http://www.statcan.ca

Statistics Canada.1998. *Statistical Profile Highlights.* Retrieved July 9, 1999, from the World Wide Web: http://www.statcan.ca

Steere, W. C. (1996). Key leadership challenges for present and future executives. In F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, & R. Beckhard (Eds.), *The leader of the future* (pp. 265-272). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Taylor, D. (1999). The five pitfalls of leadership. *Computer Weekly,* July 29, 1999, p. 8. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A55373362 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Tichy, N. M. (1982). Managing change: the technical, political, and cultural keys. *Organizational Dynamics,* Autumn, 59-80.

Tichy, N. M. (1983). *Managing strategic change: Technical, political, and cultural dynamics.* New York: Wiley.

Tichy, N. M. & Devanna, M. A. (1986). *The transformational leader.* New York: Wiley.

Tocqueville, A. (1831). Quoted in G. W. Pierson, *Tocqueville and Beaumont in America.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1893, p.296.

Towers Perrin. (1999). Why half of all mergers fail. *LI Business News, 46*(19), pp. 10+. Retrieved September 27, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A54896537 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Vasilash, G. S. (1999). Leadership. *Automotive Manufacturing and Production , 111*(5), pp. 8+. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A54793534 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Vickers, G. S. (1965). *The art of judgment: A study of policy making. London*: Harper & Row.

Walker, K. (1998). Meshing cultures in a consolidation. *Training & Development, 52*(5), pp. 83+. Retrieved September 27, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A20991476 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Wallace, A. F. C. (1956). Revitalization movements. *American Anthropologist, 58*, 264-281.

Walsh, J. P. (1988). Top management turnover following mergers and acquisitions. *Strategic Management Journal, 9*, 173-183.

Walter, G. A. (1987). *Key acquisition integration processes for four strategic orientations*. Western Academy of Management Meeting, Hollywood, CA.

Want, J. H. (1995). *Managing radical change: Beyond survival in the new business age.* New York: Wiley.

Ward, F. L., & Rossettie, R. (1998). The best fit: Effective merger implementation. *Risk Management, 45*(9), pp. 65+. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A21137522 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Weber, G. B. (1996). Growing tomorrow's leaders. In F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, & R. Beckhard (Eds.), *The leader of the future* (pp. 303-309). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Weick, K. E. (1984) Small wins: Redefining the scale of social problems. *The American Psychologist*, January.

Whitmyer, C. (1993). *In the company of others.* New York: Putnam.

Wolcott, H. F. (1985). On ethnographic intent. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 21*, (3), 187-203.

Wolcott, H. F. (1992). Posturing in qualitative research. In M. D. LeCompte, W. L. Millroy, & J. Preissle (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 3-52). New York: Academic Press.

Wolcott, H. F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and* interpretation. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zbar, J. (1999). Surviving a merger. *Computerworld*, April 19, p. 54. Retrieved September 25, 1999 from InfoTrac Basic/Expanded Academic Index/A54416766 on the World Wide Web: http://www.searchbank.com

Zenger, J. H., Musselwhite, E., Hurson, K., & Perrin, C. (1994). *Leading teams: Mastering the new role.* New York: Irwin.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STRATEGIC TASKS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT OF AN ORGANIZATION

Appendix A

Strategic Tasks for the Successful Management of an Organization

MANAGERIAL AREAS *MANAGERIAL TOOLS*

	Mission and Strategy	*Organizational Structure*	*Human Resources Management*
Technical System	Assessing environmental threats and opportunities. Assessing organizational strengths and weaknesses. Defining mission and selecting resources to accomplish it.	Differentiating: organizing work into roles. Integration: recombining roles into departments, divisions, regions, and so forth. Aligning structure to strategy.	Fitting people to roles. Specifying performance criteria for roles. Staffing and developing to fill roles (present and future).
Political System	Who gets to influence the mission and strategy. Managing coalitional behavior around strategic decisions.	Distributing power across the role structure. Balancing power across groups of roles.	Managing succession politics (who gets ahead, how they get ahead). Designing and administrating reward system (who gets what and how). Managing the politics of appraisal (who is appraised by whom and how).
Cultural System	Managing influence of values and philosophy on mission and strategy. Developing culture aligned with mission and strategy.	Developing managerial style aligned with Technical and political structure. Developing subcultures to support roles. Integrating subcultures to create company culture.	Selecting people to build or reinforce culture. Developing (socialization) to mold organization culture. Managing rewards to shape and reinforce the culture.

(Tichy, 1982, p.68)

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Appendix B

Research Participants

	n	N
Boards of Education		
Chairpersons	2	2
Board Members (1 First Nations)	4	14
Directors	2	2
Regional Director	1	2
SK Teachers' Federation Spokesperson	1	*
School Trustees	2	75
Secretary-Treasurers	2	2
Student Focus Groups	2	**
Support Staff	1	153***
Educators****		
Association Presidents	2	2
Principals	3	20
Teachers	3	241
Total Interviews	25*****	

*A spokesperson for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

**Representing 602 Beaver Flat students; Focus Group A- 6 Grade 9/10 Longford students: Focus Group B- 8 Grade 10/11 Falkland students. Students were selected by the principals of their respective schools. Turnhill's 4,250 students did not participate in the interview process.

***Representing secretaries, teacher's assistants, custodians, and bus drivers.

****In total, 8/ 263 educators participated in the interview process.

*****13/25 interview participants were members of the Amalgamation Steering Committee.

The interview identification code is presented on the following page.

Appendix B (cont'd)

INTERVIEW IDENTIFICATION

Interviews are identified by role, school division, interview number, and page(s), with a limited number of exceptions in view of preserving the anonymity of research participants.

Role:

B = Board
D = Director
E = Educator
F = Spokesperson for Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation
R = Regional Director
SS = Support Staff at School Level K-12
ST = Secretary-Treasurer
W = Student Focus Group

School Divisions:

T = Turnhill
BF = Beaver Flat
BFL = Beaver Flat Longford

Therefore, (B-T: 16, p. 5) would read as Board member - Turnhill School Division: Interview 16, page 5).

APPENDIX C

INITIAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Appendix C

Initial Interview Guide

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. My interest is in the area of educational governance reform. Specifically, I am seeking to understand the process of an amalgamation and/or restructuring of school divisions and the management of the process. To that end, I am interested in your answers to these questions:

1. Why did amalgamation become an issue in your school division?
2. How did the process of amalgamation unfold?
3. Were you involved in any formal or informal discussions during the amalgamation process? Can you tell me something about them?
4. What critical incidents or important events or issues, if any, occurred during the amalgamation process? Can you describe them to me? How were these incidents managed and/or resolved?
5. What management conditions or decisions affected the flow of the process?
6. What processes were used to resolve issues / how were the issues resolved?
   (a) Mill rate differences?
   (b) School division policies?
   (c) Division of assets?
   (d) LINC agreements?
   (e) Organizational design?
   (f) Costs of amalgamation?
   (g) Technical resources?
7. Who or what groups were influential in moving the amalgamation process forward?
8. Where did the power to make decisions lie? At the division level? At the school district level?
9. What mechanisms were in place to resolve disputes? Government policy and regulations? Budget allocations? Distribution of power and influence? Accession issues?
10. What was done to address differences in the culture of the respective school divisions?
11. How was the transition managed from a people perspective? Individually? Groups? Division? Schools? Teachers? Support staff? Students? Parents?
12. During the process, what efforts were made to bring people together? Are integration efforts ongoing, and, if so, in what way?
13. What role does leadership play in all of this? To whom was leadership being provided?
14. Having just experienced an amalgamation, what does the phrase "school division amalgamation" mean to you today?

APPENDIX D

OVERVIEW OF GOVERNANCE IN CANADA

Appendix D

Overview of Governance in Canada

Educational Governance in Canada: Trends and Implications (1999)

Province	Boards	Trustees	Schools	Students	Education Funding	Negotiations
BC	60 (from 75) [59 public, 1 francophone education authority]	425	1,737	593,000	Provided entirely by the province under a block grant system. Access to property tax through referenda.	Two tiered system. Provincial matters including all those with cost implications negotiated by employers' association. Local negotiations on other matters require provincial ratification.
AB	64 (181) [43 public, 18 Catholic, 3 francophone]	475	1,672	542,920	Province provides all education funding under block grant system. Approximately equal amounts come from general revenue sources and property taxes levied by the province. School boards may seek elector approval to levy tax on property to a maximum of 3% of their budget allocation.	Local collective bargaining.
SK	100 [79 public with 3 Joint, 19 Catholic, 1 Protestant, 1 francophone]	700	800	191,000	Province provides 40% through provincial foundation grant. Boards generate 58% of funding from property tax base through locally determined levies and 2% from tuition fees.	Two tiered system with provincial government -trustee (5-4) bargaining committee. Local bargaining on certain required matter and other locally determined issues.
MB	57 [56 public, 1 francophone]	490	831	187,000	Primarily provincial funding out of general revenues & provincial levy on property. School board levied local property tax also.	Local collective bargaining.

ON	116 (172) [31 anglophone & 4 francophone public, 28 anglophone & 8 francophone Catholic plus 37 school authorities]	700 (from 2,400)	4,743	2,072,290	Combination provincial grants and local property taxes. Boards lost the right to local taxation in 1998.	Local collective bargaining.
Q	72 (158) [9 English, 60 French, 3 special status First Nations]	1,141	2,767	1,150,617	Eighty-five% from provincial grants & 15% local property tax levies.	Provincial bargaining under employer committees. Local arrangements on matters set out in provincial agreement.
NB	18 (18)	0	398	135,000	100% provincial funding from general revenues.	Provincial bargaining.
NS	7 (22) [6 regional & 1 provincial francophone	98	462	162,359	Funded by province from general revenues & mandatory property taxes collected by municipalities.	Two tiered system with provincial & local bargaining.
PEI	3 (5) [2 anglophone & 1 francophone public	29	72	24,365	Provincial funding from general revenues.	Provincial bargaining with administrative representation from school boards.
NFD	11(27) [10 anglophone and 1 francophone	160	365	97,401	Entirely funded by province from general revenues.	Provincial bargaining with representation from trustee association on team.

Cross Canada Chart. (1999). *Education governance in Canada: Trends and implications.* CEPAN. Retrieved July 8, 1999 on the World Wide Web: http://www.cepan.ca

APPENDIX E

NEWS RELEASE

Appendix E

News Release

Jun 01, 1998

Education 98 - 421

MORE SCHOOL DIVISIONS SUCCESSFULLY RESTRUCTURE

Education Minister Pat Atkinson today announced that nine more school divisions will come together as a result of the government's policy of local determination for school division amalgamation.

"This marks the first time in many years that we will have fewer than 100 school divisions in Saskatchewan," Atkinson said. "This is 17 per cent fewer school divisions than we had before we started our restructuring effort in December 1996. It affects 20 per cent of all students in the province outside of Saskatoon and Regina."

The minister congratulated the Francophone education community for initiating the restructuring from nine governance boards to one central board with parent and community representative councils in every school. Minister Atkinson moved second reading of legislative amendments to accommodate the Francophone amalgamation today.

"During the 1996 public consultations educational stakeholders and the public told us they wanted restructuring to be locally determined with provincial leadership," Atkinson said. "Other provinces have forced school division amalgamation. In Saskatchewan, we have supported a voluntary process. I congratulate those school divisions who have voluntarily done what is in the best interest of their students."

This amalgamation, along with amalgamations in the fall of 1997 when 20 school divisions restructured into 8 new school divisions, reduces the total number in Saskatchewan from 119 to 99.

According to Atkinson, the direct educational benefits of restructuring have just begun to show in the new school divisions. These benefits include increased access for teachers and students to a broader base of specialized support personnel and resource material.

"I recently concluded a series of meetings with school trustees and teachers all across the province where I encouraged them to maintain this positive momentum on restructuring," Atkinson said, "I am looking forward to building our successes and continuing to improve the quality of education for Saskatchewan students."

APPENDIX F

CHRONOLOGY OF THE TURNHILL/BEAVER FLAT AMALGAMATION PROCESS

Appendix F

Chronology of the Turnhill/Beaver Flat Amalgamation Process

M = Minister of Education

	Beaver Flat	Turnhill/Beaver Flat Joint Meetings	Turnhill	Ladybank
1994		1994		
	Concerned; exploration with two s.d.			
Jan 6				Communication by M to Ladybank re amalgamation pilot
Feb	SELU study re the amalgamation of 3 s.d.			
May 11	Beaver Flat to Sask Ed re prov'l amalgamation pilot			
May 24				Ladybank to M re discussions with Beaver Flat, M informed of Longford's position
July 6	Beaver Flat to Ladybank re desire to be part of prov'l pilot			
1995		1995		
Early April	Public meetings with discussion groups in Longford, Falkland, Spence resulting in decision to gather more support documentation on all adjoining s.d.	Spring 1995 marks the commencement of the Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation process.		
Sept 12				Ladybank and Beaver Flat Secretary Treasurers exchange info
Oct 30	Beaver Flat Board meets with trustees and teachers to share information			
Nov 1	Falkland trustees send letter to Beaver Flat with motion to amalgamate, with a preference for Turnhill			
Nov 3			Turnhill Board Retreat to consider amalgamation with Beaver Flat	

	Beaver Flat	Turnhill/Beaver Flat	Turnhill	Ladybank
Nov 6, 7, 8	Public meetings in towns of Falkland, Longford, and Spence to share information		Director communicates with Regional Director requesting info on what needs to be considered re amalgamation process, Director attends Turnhill Teacher's Assoc. meeting by invitation	
Nov 13	Longford trustee meeting, indicate to Turnhill desire to join Crocus (another s.d.)			
Nov 14	SaskEd communication to Turnhill Board Chair re general process to follow			
Nov 27	Beaver Flat Annual Meeting; Longford indicates amalgamation preference for Ladybank, then Crocus, then Turnhill; opinion form indicated only 4 out of 60 for amalgamation with Turnhill			
Nov 28			Letter received from Beaver Flat indicating resolution to open negotiations re amalgamation	
Nov 29	Longford RM requests Beaver Flat to put a "hold on amalgamation proceedings at this time" Town of Longford indicates need for more time, feels "input process has been just a rushed formality"		Letters received from Longford and Longford RM; Memorandums sent to Turnhill Board and to all employees re resolution received from Beaver Flat; Letters received from Longford and Longford RM re their position to amalgamation with Turnhill	
Nov 30			Phone response to Longford RM letter	
Dec 4	Beaver Flat to Turnhill Chair; committed to Turnhill and requests negotiations commence			
Dec 5	Meeting of representatives from Longford RM, Longford town, and Longford trustees request meeting with Falkland trustees		Director received call from Longford RM; Director contacted Turnhill Board members	
Dec 7		First Meeting of Beaver Flat and Turnhill Boards and Sask Ed		

	Beaver Flat	Turnhill/Beaver Flat	Turnhill	Ladybank
Dec 11			Turnhill passes resolution to commence amalgamation discussions	
Dec 12	Meeting as requested on Dec 5; ask for time to investigate other choices with assistance of their two Board members and that same board members are included in all proceedings between Beaver Flat and Turnhill		Memorandums sent to all Turnhill employees re Dec 11 resolution	
Dec 13	Beaver Flat sends letter of intent to seek amalgamation with Turnhill to M; M responds favorably			Regional D of Ladybank responds to Director of Beaver Flat re being agreeable to enter into discussions re Longford
Dec 14		Correspondence Turnhill Chair to Beaver Flat Chair, acknowledges resolutions		
Dec 15		Boards and department officials discuss proposed amalgamation; early indication of concerns aired- particularly the issues of Board representation and Longford		
Dec 19	Falkland to Beaver Flat supporting the amalgamation, request representation of each school in Beaver Flat on amalgamated Board and to be kept informed			
1996		**1996**		
Jan 4		Director of Beaver Flat and Turnhill and Turnhill S-T set agenda for Jan 18 and 25 meetings; Discussed possible structure of Amalgamation Steering Committee (ASC); see Appendix re ASC structure; Turnhill S-T to keep a formal record of all proceedings		
Jan 11		Notification by respective Directors to ASC members re Jan 25 meeting		

	Beaver Flat	Turnhill/Beaver Flat	Turnhill	Ladybank
Jan 4 to 11		Selection of principal, teacher, and support staff ASC representative from both s. d. by each respective group		Regional Director of Ladybank agrees to discussions re Longford amalgamating with them; will attend meetings as needed
Jan 18		Morning meeting attended by Beaver Flat and Turnhill Directors and Regional and provincial officials. Issues discussed included governance, First Nations representation, new board and election, finance, boundaries, and teacher contracts		
Jan 18		First meeting of ASC and Turnhill Regional Director;: reviewed prior events, discussed role of committee, what issues need to be under discussion, concerns		
Jan 20			Update memorandum. to Turnhill employees	
Jan 22	Beaver Flat Board informs other divisions of decision to enter into discussions with Turnhill			
Jan 1996 to Jan 1997		Representatives on ASC meet with both own and counterpart members to address concerns/possible solutions, bring these to the ASC, and report back to their group membership	Memorandum from Turnhill Admin rep to Turnhill school administrators re progress on amalgamation discussions	First joint meeting of Beaver Flat and Ladybank re possible move of Longford to Ladybank, throughout the process, discussions between Ladybank and Beaver Flat mirrored those taking place between Beaver Flat and Turnhill
Jan 25		Turnhill/Beaver Flat Amalgamation Public Meeting at Falkland to share info with ratepayers and employees of Beaver Flat: review of amalgamation process to date, Turnhill system overview, Q & A; Regional Directors, both Directors, Board and trustee members, ASC members attend		
Jan 31		Meeting of Director of Turnhill and Beaver Flat and Associate Deputy Minister	Letter to Beaver Flat S-T re motion to continue discussion re Longford amalgamating with Ladybank	

	Beaver Flat	Turnhill/Beaver Flat	Turnhill	Ladybank
Feb 5		Turnhill/Beaver Flat Amalgamation Public Meeting with Turnhill, same format as Jan 25 meeting	Director of Turnhill to M informing re issues of Longford and representation on new Board	
Feb 12		Joint meeting of Turnhill/Beaver Flat support staffs with Turnhill Board to begin negotiations for a tentative agreement		
Feb 14		ASC meets; committee reports, discussions, recommendations to Boards		
Feb 26		Financial Report on Amalgamation of Turnhill/Beaver Flat by Turnhill S-T to Turnhill Board; Meeting of ASC; negotiations continue		
Late Feb		Minister of Education plans meetings with Division Boards throughout province to discuss educational restructuring		
M 1		Meeting with M for discussions re government position on provincial amalgamation initiatives, time lines, and provincial foundation grants	Memorandom to employees: negotiations on hold, pending resolution of Longford to join Ladybank, waiting for guidelines and directions from M	
M 6		ASC meets; discussions continue		
M 13				Ladybank passes resolution committing to discussions re possible amalgamation of Longford with Ladybank; meetings paralleling those of Turnhill/Beaver Flat ASC continue
M 14		Letter to the M requesting reassurance that Turnhill/Beaver Flat amalgamation plans are compatible to provincial restructuring plans before Turnhill/Beaver Flat engage for further discussions		

	Beaver Flat	Turnhill/Beaver Flat	Turnhill	Ladybank
M 18		Assurances from M received; negotiations resume		
M 28	Ladybank and Beaver Flat amalgamation public meeting at Longford, Same format as on Jan 25 and Feb 5 meetings; Beaver Flat S. D. Opinionnaire results re amalgamation with Turnhill reported: Yes=112, No=22; Beaver Flat Teachers Assoc. Survey returned 29/40; 24/29 were for amalgamation with Turnhill	Turnhill/Beaver Flat	Turnhill	Ladybank
Early April		Director s of Turnhill/Beaver Flat are approached by Dr. Vivian Hajnal (advisor) and M. Reddyk (researcher) requesting permission to conduct a case study of the s.d. amalgamation. After discussion with the respective Boards, permission is granted; subsequently, Reddyk attends various group meetings as possible.		
April 2		ASC meets; discussions continue		
April 9		M sends letter of support and encouragement; Meeting of ASC		
April 16		Informal discussion re the amalgamation by Director of Turnhill and Reddyk; ASC meeting: reports, discussions; action plan		
April 25			Director sends memorandum to employees re principles of amalgamation and amalgamation progress	
April 29		Meeting of Turnhill and Beaver Flat Teacher Associations to discuss concerns and draft report for ASC		

	Beaver Flat	Turnhill/Beaver Flat	Turnhill	Ladybank
April 30		Letter sent to M re principles of amalgamation, notice of resolution to implement amalgamation of the respective areas as agreed, joint requests to alter boundaries and make property transfers		Joint requests to M to implement the amalgamation of Longford with Ladybank
May 9		Committee of Directors, S-T, and Regional D's meet to discuss such issues as personnel, file transfers, division of assets and liabilities re Longford decision, elections, use of ASC; recommendation to Board re: salaries, agreements, policy manuals		
May 16		ASC meets: up-date of activities, reviewed progress, principles of amalgamation reviewed, budget issues, committee reports, discussion re Longford school and building project		
May 22			Tuition agreement settled with First Nation's Reserve in Turnhill s.d.	
June 5		S-T of Turnhill, Beaver Flat, Ladybank meet re disposition of Beaver Flat assets and liabilities		
June 12				Ladybank/Beaver Flat amalgamation meeting
June 13		ASC meeting; LINC agreement, Longford teachers re transfers, committee reports, general recommendation to support a 25/75 split of all assets and liabilities, boundary issues		
June 17		Communication between Turnhill/Beaver Flat Director's re resolution of final issues		
July 4 - 11			Turnhill deals with Eagle Reserve (in Beaver Flat s.d. re tuition agreement, representation of board	

	Beaver Flat	Turnhill/Beaver Flat	Turnhill	Ladybank
Aug 21, 29				Agreement by Longford and Longford RM re 25/75 split of Beaver Flat assets and liabilities
Sept 5		ASC meeting: representatives from all three divisions, discussion re specifics of division of assets and liabilities, develop draft of details. Turnhill/Beaver Flat bus tour of facilities in Beaver Flat		
Sept 12				Ladybank to Turnhill re final details
Sept 23			Special Meeting to approve same list of items which serve as foundation for amalgamation as of Jan 1, 1997	
Sept 24	Chair of Beaver Flat Board sends letter to M requesting a disestablishment order for Beaver Flat; Memorandum sent to Beaver Flat principals to inform staffs re order request		Letter in kind sent to M simultaneously	Letter in kind sent to M simultaneously
Oct 14			Director of Turnhill to M re resolution of Eagle Reserve board representation issue	
Oct 15	Sask Municipal Board to Director, approving arrangement for division of assets and liabilities			
Oct 21	M to Beaver Flat Chair acknowledging disestablishment request			
Oct 30			M to Turnhill Chair acknowledging amalgamation request	
Dec 5		Disestablishment/Amalgamation orders signed by M		
Dec 9		Letter of congratulations from LEADS president		
Dec 11		Nominations close for elections of new board members for subdivisions of Longford, Falkland and Spence		

1997		1997		
Jan 1		Jan 1 - By order of the M the Disestablishment of the Beaver Flat School Division; the amalgamation of Longford subdivision with Ladybank; the amalgamation of Falkland and Spence subdivisions with Turnhill School Division →	Jan 8 - Subdivision elections occur; Longford- new representative, Falkland and Spence - incumbents returned →	Jan 16 - Press Conference with M, Sask Ed officials, Directors, Boards, ASC members, trustees and interested individuals present

APPENDIX G

AMALGAMATION STEERING COMMITTEE

Appendix G

Amalgamation Steering Committee (ASC)

Turnhill School Division

Board Chairperson

2 Board Representatives

Director of Education

Secretary-Treasurer

First Nations Representative

Principal Representative

Turnhill Teachers' Association President

Teacher Representative

Support Staff Representative

Beaver Flat School Division

Board Chairperson

3 Board Representatives (1 First Nations)

Director of Education

Secretary-Treasurer

Principal Representative

Beaver Flat Teachers' Association President

Teacher Representative

Support Staff Representative

Regional Director

APPENDIX H

PRINCIPLES OF AMALGAMATION

Appendix H

Principles of Amalgamation

Given that the Board of Education of Turnhill School Division and the Board of Education of Beaver Flat School Division formally resolve to proceed with amalgamation, it is agreed that the following principles shall guide the process.

Principles of Amalgamation

- that the central purpose of this amalgamation is to provide the best educational services to all students.
- That the areas being amalgamated with the existing Turnhill School Division include the Falkland school district and the Spence school district from the existing Beaver Flat School Division.
- That the Board members and subdivisions remain unchanged in Turnhill and that the two subdivisions being added be represented by one Board member each.
- That First Nations students be served by tuition agreements between each of the First Nations and the Board of Education of Turnhill School Division.
- That the first day of operation of the amalgamated division shall be January 1, 1997.
- That the by-elections for the Board members from the newly added subdivisions and districts of Falkland and Spence shall be held in accordance with the Minister's order.
- That upon the signing of this document, the Board of Education of Beaver Flat School Division and the Director of Education will collaborate with the Board of Education of Turnhill School Division and the Director of Education in making decisions that will affect the future operations of the amalgamated school division.
- That there be ongoing involvement and two-way communication in resolving outstanding issues with the groups involved in the process.
- That every effort be made to ensure all employees of the new system be made to feel that they are all part of the new Turnhill team.

APPENDIX I

TURNHILL/BEAVER FLAT ACTION PLAN

Appendix I

Turnhill/Beaver Flat Action Plan

Action to be taken	by Whom	When
Resolution to amalgamation.	Boards	April 30
Basic principles signed.	Boards	April 30
Communication of above to staff, students, and public.	Directors/Principals	May 1
Ongoing communication with the Department of Education.	Directors	ongoing
Ongoing communication with all staff and the public.	Directors	ongoing
Amalgamation Committee and employee groups to meet to work out details.	All involved	May-June (Fall, 1996)
Budgets set.	Boards	April 30
Mill rates set.	Boards	April 30
Staffing considerations.	Directors	(ongoing) May, June
Transfer of personnel information to Turnhill.	Secretary-Treasurers	ongoing (Summer-Fall, 1996)
Election process (division and district).	Secretary-Treasurer	Fall, 1996

APPENDIX J

ISSUES OF AMALGAMATION

Appendix J

Issues of Amalgamation

Amalgamation Issues

- Division and Subdivision Boundaries (Disestablishment)
- Elections/Representatives - Guarantees??
- Budget - Before and After July 1/96
- Transfer of Assets/Accounts/Titles
- Teacher Contracts
- Local Agreement
- Caretaker Contracts
- Bus Drivers and Routes
- Taxation and Grants
- Continuation of Schools - Guarantee? - Program Maintenance
- Info regarding home-based education
- Personnel Files
- Payroll Information
- Insurance policies - transfer
- Transfer of Agreements - First Nation groups - Zerox - Telephones
- Office Personnel
- School Year 96/97 -Opening Day - Institutes/Conventions
- Mill Rate
- Department Support/ Facilitation
- Timeline
- The Decision-Making Process - Action Plan

APPENDIX K

RESEARCH PERMISSION: COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

UNIVERSITY of SASKATCHEWAN

UNIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ETHICS IN HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION

(Behavioral Sciences)

NAME AND EC #: Dr. Vivian Hajnal
(Mary Reddyk)
Department of Educational Administration
College of Education

For Reference: #97-60

DATE: April 8, 1997

The University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Human Experimentation (Behavioral Sciences) has reviewed your study, "Managing the Process: School Division Amalgamation/Restructuring" (97-60).

1. Your study has been APPROVED.
2. Any significant changes to your protocol should be reported to the Director of Research Services for Committee consideration in advance of its implementation.
3. The term of this approval is for 3 years.

Michael Owen, Secretary
for the University Advisory Committee
on Ethics in Human Experimentation, Behavioral Science

Please direct all correspondence to:

Michael Owen, Secretary
UACEHE, Behavioral Science
Office of Research Services
University of Saskatchewan
Room 210 Kirk Hall, 117 Science Place
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5C8

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ETHICS IN BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

RESEARCHER'S SUMMARY

1. SUBMITTED BY: **DEPARTMENT: Educational Administration**

Dr. Vivian Hajnal (Faculty Member)

1a. Mary Reddyk (Ph.D. Candidate)

2. PROJECT TITLE: Managing the Process: School Division Amalgamation / Restructuring

3. ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyse the process of educational governance reform as it is manifested in the amalgamation and/or restructuring of school divisions. Particular attention will be given to the technical, political, and cultural aspects of the change process. The renewed interest in school division consolidation in Saskatchewan has indicated a need for current information within a provincial context on amalgamation process management.

4. FUNDING:

The student researcher is on unpaid educational leave from the Swift Current School Division No. 94 for the 1996-1997 year. Funding is supported through a Graduate Teaching Fellowship (1996-1997). It is the researcher's intent to apply to the SSTA Research Centre for additional support.

5. SUBJECTS:

The sample of participants for the study will be drawn from school divisions in the province which have undergone an amalgamation/restructuring process. The sample will consist of participants from Boards of Education, local school district boards, directors, teachers and support staff, and parents. The director from each school division will be contacted and the sampling strategies of stratified purposeful and snowball sampling will be used to select participants. The selected participants will be informed of the nature of the study, and invitations will be extended to become part of the study.

6. Methods/Procedures:

A qualitative study will be conducted using the components of interview and collection of documents. A semi-structured interview format will be used in the study. While interviews will be fairly open-ended and conversational, the primary interview questions will serve as a guide to the researcher. See the attached interview guide.

7. RISK or DECEPTION:

There are no known risks from participating in this study.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY:

Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured through the use of pseudonyms in reference to sites and participants in the study.

9. CONSENT:

The consent form will be provided to all participants following an explanation of the purpose of the study. The consent form and cover letter are attached to this application.

10. DEBRIEFING and FEEDBACK:

Each participant or focus group representative(s) will have the opportunity to review the transcript of the interview audiotape. This validating membership check will establish credibility and ensure that the obtained data is available for use in the final document. A summary of the findings will be available to participants upon request.

11. SIGNATURES:

The Research Proposal has been reviewed and is recommended for approval.

Department Head

Vivian Hopral March 19/97

Faculty Supervisor

Mary Reddyk

Graduate Student

APPENDIX L

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Appendix L

Letter to Participants

Dear Participant:

An area of educational governance that is receiving renewed attention in Saskatchewan is the amalgamation of school divisions. This interest results from a call for increased efficiency and equality of educational opportunity for children. My thesis topic is *School Division Amalgamations: Process and Transitions.* The purpose of this project is to describe the amalgamation process and the management of change from technical, political, and cultural perspectives. I believe that the results of this study may well provide helpful information to Saskatchewan Boards of Education, administrators, and other decision makers involved in school division amalgamations.

Your participation in this study will be a valuable contribution to understanding the process and management of amalgamations and I invite your participation. Your participation is voluntary, and if you consent to be a participant, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. As the researcher, I will advise you of any new information that may have a bearing on your decision to continue in this study.

For the purpose of data collection, I will be conducting interviews with consenting participants, either individually or as part of a focus group. The interviews will include some specific questions as well as the opportunity for participants' personal sharing of individual perceptions and feelings. The interviews will last approximately one hour and will be tape recorded for the purpose of accuracy. However, only the researcher and her advisor will have access to the data on the tape recordings, transcripts of tapes, and any notes generated during the interview. In addition, I will be examining available documentation of the amalgamation process.

The confidentiality and anonymity of your responses in the interview will be protected by the use of pseudonyms in reference to the site and participants. You will have the opportunity to review your interview transcript in order tod determine accuracy and agreement on your perceptions. Any information collected in the study will be used for academic purposes only. Upon completion, a copy of the dissertation will be available at your school division office.

During the process of this study, you may contact either myself (343-0299) or my advisor, Dr. Vivian Hajnal (966–7611) of the Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan, to receive any further information or answers to your questions or concerns relating to this research.

This project is part of my work towards completing a Doctoral Degree in Educational Administration and your participation is appreciated. Thank you for giving this request your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Reddyk
1401 Elliott Street
Saskatoon, SK
S7N 0V9